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A

NARRATIVE

OF

EVENTS,

THAT HAVE LATELY TAKEN PLACE

IN IRELAND

AMONG

THE SOCIETY CALLED QUAKERS;

WITH

CORRESPONDING DOCUMENTS,

AND

OCCASIONAL OBSERVATIONS.

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By W. Farmborough

But why dost thou JUDGE thy brother? or why dost thou SET AT NOUGHT thy brother? for we shall ALL stand before the judgment-seat of CHRIST.

Let us not therefore JUDGE one another any more, but judge this rather, that no man put a STUMBLING BLOCK, or an OCCASION TO FALL, in his brother's way.—*Rom. ch.* xiv. *v.* 10 & 15.

And mark;—it is not the *different practice from one another* that breaks the peace and unity, but the JUDGING OF ONE ANOTHER because of different practices.—*Isaac Penington, vol.* i. *p.* 320.

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1804.

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Section 36

" The great error of the ages of the apostacy has been to set up an " OUTWARD ORDER AND UNIFORMITY, and to make men's consciences " bend thereto, either by arguments of wisdom or by force; but the pro- " perty of the true church government, is to leave the conscience to its " full liberty in the Lord, to preserve it single and entire for the Lord to " exercise, and TO SEEK UNITY IN THE LIGHT, AND IN THE SPIRIT, " WALKING SWEETLY AND HARMONIOUSLY TOGETHER IN THE MIDST " OF DIFFERENT PRACTICES."—*Penington, vol.* i. *p.* 323.

" It seems to be time for the sincere in heart to wave the CEREMONI- " ALS OF RELIGION (concerning which there hath been enough of con- " tention and animosity) for the sake of its ESSENCE. In proportion as " men are gathered to the ONE THING NEEDFUL, the GOVERNMENT OF " CHRIST'S SPIRIT IN THE HEART, they lose the inclination for contention, " and are in the true way to unity. Then can they breathe forth the pri- " mitive and permanent gospel language, " Glory to God in the highest, " and on earth peace, good will towards men."—*Preface to the Summary of the History, Doctrine, and Discipline of Friends.*

M'Creery Printer, Houghton-street, Liverpool.

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PREFACE.

FOR upwards of a century the ſociety called Quakers has exiſted, an amicable, compact, and united body; receiving conſiderable acceſſions of proſelytes from almoſt every other religious community; and with very few inſtances of ſeceſſion among its own members, on the ground of deliberate and conſcientious diſſent, although many have been diſowned for oppoſition, either by immoral conduct or otherwiſe, to the eſtabliſhed Rules.

The occurrence of events, like thoſe recorded in the following narrative, would therefore naturally be regarded as extraordinary, and could not fail to excite a peculiar intereſt. From various cauſes, however, it has happened, that correct information concerning theſe events, has not been procurable, without great difficulty, even by perſons

ſons who have taken conſiderable pains to obtain it. Vague and erroneous reports have, indeed, continued to circulate, and ſome of them have been extremely injurious to the character both of the ſociety, and of thoſe who have ſeparated from it. To counteract the evils occaſioned by theſe reports, to perform an act of hiſtorical juſtice to both the parties, and to gratify the wiſhes of thoſe who are deſirous of a correct ſtatement of the facts, have been the original and chief inducements to this publication, which, it was at firſt intended, ſhould conſiſt of a ſimple record of the tranſactions and documents, unaccompanied by any comments. It ſoon appeared, however, that the introduction of *ſome* obſervations was abſolutely neceſſary, not only for the ſake of preſerving a due connexion in the narrative, but alſo of explaining ſeveral parts of it; and eſpecially to readers not intimately converſant with the diſcipline of the ſociety. In performing this office, the intereſt excited by the ſubject, has ſuggeſted a variety of reflections connected with it. Different perſons will doubtleſs entertain different opinions concerning theſe reflections; but the narrative itſelf is not neceſſarily connected with them; and it is hoped the facts and documents are ſo ſtated, as to enable every reader to draw his own concluſions from them. The events are novel

and

and unprecedented in the hiſtory of the ſociety; they have been collected with impartiality, fidelity, and diligence; they are capable of much intereſting and inſtructive application; and a correct ſtatement of them may therefore be acceptable, and even uſeful to thoſe in whoſe minds different ſentiments may be excited by them.

30*th March*, 1804.

ERRATA.

Page 3, Line 24, for *conceive*, read *promote*.
15, —— 29, for *Ileland*, read *Ireland*.
19, —— 18, 19, for *immediately preceding and during the intervals of the adjourned sittings of the yearly meeting*, read *immediately before and after, and sometimes (with the express permission of the yearly meeting) during the intervals of the adjourned sittings of that meeting*.
21, —— 4, for *began*, read *begun*.
21, for *continues*, read *continue*.
25, —— 2, for *were*, read *was*.
39, —— 9, for *meeting*, read *meetings*.
43, —— 33, } omit, *the words of*.
44, —— 1, }
48, —— 15. for *is*, read *its*.
51, —— 25, 26, omit, *by the monthly meeting to which they belonged*.
64, —— 16, } for *Pennington*, read *Penington*.
66, —— 31, }
86, —— 24, for *meetings*, read *meeting*.
94, —— 29, 30, for *persons*, read *person*.
96, —— 17, for *translated*, read *edited*.
107, —— 3, 4, for *the intervals of the sittings of*, read *in connexion with*.
108, —— 18, for *our*, read *of our*.
119, —— 19, for *TWELFTH*, read *NINTH*.
115, —— 5, for *pratices*, read *practices*.
131, —— 18, for *were*, read *was*.
165, —— 15, for *is*, read *are*.
175, —— 14, for *councils*, read *counsels*.
205, —— 24, for *yet healed. What shall console, &c.* read *yet healed,——what shall console, &c.*
209, —— 27, 28, for *first printed in America, has since been reprinted in Dublin and London*, read *first printed in Dublin, has since been reprinted in London*.
217, —— 26, for *their*, read *our*.

APPENDIX.

16, —— 21, omit *a*.
29, —— 13, for *that the*, read *that of the*.
30, —— 4, for *form*, read *forms*,

INTRODUCTION.

RELIGIOUS Societies, however distinguished from each other by a diversity in their opinions, modes of worship, internal government, and appropriate customs, appear, in the progress of time, to have passed through a very similar process. The formation of a new sect necessarily pre-supposes great zeal in the minds of its founders. Sometimes persecution, and generally difficulties and opposition are then to be encountered; and, by the operation of a wise law in the constitution of human nature, the exertion which is made in surmounting these obstacles, is adapted, in each successive instance, to increase the zeal which will enable its possessors to triumph in future conflicts. Soon, however, must the first generation pass away, and not unfrequently with them or their immediate descendants, the peculiar circumstances under which the society was first formed cease to operate. When this becomes the case, and in an especial manner if persecution no

 longer

longer exists, inferior principles, common to human nature, resume their powerful operation, and the members of the ſociety become like other men, though ſtill diſtinguiſhed by peculiar modes and cuſtoms. That active zeal for its intereſts, which eminently diſtinguiſhed the firſt founders of the ſociety, inſpired them with a readineſs to ſacrifice all worldly conſiderations in order to promote its welfare; but, in the minds of their deſcendants, wealth, pleaſure, and honour, regain that aſcendency, which in all ages they ſeem to poſſeſs over the bulk of mankind. In moſt inſtances, however, it has happened that a virtuous few ſtill remain: theſe preſerve their attachment to the cauſe for which they are aſſociated; and the painful reflections, induced by the lukewarmneſs of their brethren, operate in producing even a further increaſe of zeal in themſelves. For ſome time this faithful band perſevere in their efforts for reanimating the ſociety with the active ſpirit of its founders, and, without reſorting to any new means, devote themselves with generous and unwearied ardor, to give effect to the rules and inſtitutions eſtabliſhed by their anceſtors. Theſe exertions ſeldom ſucceed in fully producing the desired effect. Hence the prevalence of worldly motives, and the weakneſs of human nature become the ſubject of lamentation; they excite many a painful reflection in the minds of thoſe who are thus benevolently exerciſed, and who are ſometimes tempted to give up the cauſe of truth and virtue, under the influence of deſpondency.—Happily, however, ſuch impreſſions are not permanent, and the perſevering virtue of ardent minds urges them afreſh to active exertions. Thoſe perſons eſpecially, who are pre-eminent in zeal, are in time led

led to inquire whether the deficiencies which they lament are to be aſcribed to ſome imperfection in the exiſting Rules and Inſtitutions of the Society—to a failure in the right application of them—or to the want of new and varied Rules and Inſtitutions, more adapted to preſent exigencies.

By these inquiries, particularly if they derive encouragement from the concurrent practice of the Society, or from any peculiar or extraordinary circumſtances of the times, the mind becomes in ſome degree liberated from a ſubjection to ancient prescription. From an attention to mere Rules and Inſtitutions, it is led to a ſerious examination of the *doctrines and opinions* maintained by the Society, ſome of which have been perhaps too implicitly adopted by its members from education or tradition. The effect of ſuch inquiries is, that new views on theſe ſubjects are preſented; and if theſe become confirmed by ſubſequent and mature reflection, they naturally produce new matter for intereſting diſcuſſion to the Society. Hence ariſes diverſity of opinion; and under ſuch circumſtances, it is ſometimes found, that well-intentioned and even pious men are not always the moſt accommodating. From the ardor with which ſome conceive and others oppoſe new plans of Reform, or new views reſpecting Rules, Inſtitutions, Doctrines, or Opinions; and from the degrees of importance which each aſſociates with the effect of their reſpective and oppoſing exertions, a colliſion of intereſts and wiſhes takes place;—the zeal and warmth of temper with which the controverted points are diſcuſſed, ſerve to create a mutual pertinacity;—and not unfrequently the bands of brotherly kindneſs and

and charity are thereby weakened. They who cannot induce the Society to adopt their meaſures, are ſometimes led to ſeparate from it rather than abandon them. And even when the rejection of theſe meaſures is not deemed a ſufficient motive for leaving the Society, their ſeparation from it may notwithſtanding be rendered unavoidable, either by the temper and conduct of its Rulers, or by the very conſtitutions of Societies themſelves, which in many inſtances have declared, as an eſſential law, that diſſimilarity in conduct or opinions on certain points, cannot conſiſtently be tolerated amongſt their members, and have therefore required that they who are refractory in ſuch reſpects, ſhall be excluded from communion.

At conjunctures like theſe, how precious is "THE "WISDOM THAT IS FROM ABOVE, WHICH IS "FIRST PURE, THEN PEACEABLE, GENTLE AND "EASY TO BE INTREATED, FULL OF MERCY AND "GOOD FRUITS, WITHOUT PARTIALITY, AND "WITHOUT HYPOCRISY!"

But unhappily, the emotions of zeal, or the turbulence of other paſſions ſtifle the "ſtill ſmall voice "within," and not only prevent the exerciſe of this divine wiſdom in the minds of both the parties, but incapacitate them from perceiving its excellence.

Were it not for these obſtacles, they who have been ſincerely and ſtrongly impreſſed with a conviction that the inſtitutions of their Sect, and the articles of its Creed, have been productive of much good; and that they themſelves have experimentally derived great benefit from them; and moſt of all, if they be perſuaded

ſuaded that theſe Inſtitutions or Articles are founded on divine authority, would nevertheleſs be ſo far from deſiring to oppoſe, that they would cordially promote a fair and full inquiry into the origin, nature, and value of them, from a full conviction of the truth of that important axiom, "that every Society, which does "not frequently recur to its firſt principles, is in dan-"ger of decay."

And if, in conſequence of this ſpirit of inquiry, ſome members of the Society, who are known to act from upright and conſcientious motives, ſhould propoſe meaſures, which by other members might be regarded as the introduction of haſty and dangerous innovations or novel opinions, it would ſtill be admitted that theſe meaſures were entitled to a deliberate and impartial conſideration; and this ſentiment would be ſanctioned and encouraged, even by thoſe who, under the influence of honeſt zeal, might deem it right to withhold their ſupport from the meaſures propoſed.

On the other hand, they who, with equal ſincerity, believe that ſome of the inſtitutions of their ſect are really injurious, and ſome of its tenets demonſtrably erroneous, however ſtrenuous they may hereby become to effect a change, yet if they alſo were actuated by "the wiſdom from above," they would never forget that zeal ſhould always be tempered with knowledge;—that although reform may to them appear indiſpenſably neceſſary, yet unleſs that neceſſity be made clearly apparent to others, their ſupport ought not to be even deſired;—and that their oppo-

ſition,

ſition, even to the moſt wiſe and virtuous meaſures, ſhould never engender anger, enmity, or reſentment, in the breaſts of thoſe by whom ſuch meaſures are recommended.

It is, indeed, highly important for both the parties to be ſuitably impreſſed with a conviction, that the rights of private judgment conſtitute the main pillar and the firſt principle of every religious Proteſtant ſociety; and that the exerciſe of theſe rights ſhould therefore be, not only preſerved inviolate, but invariably reſpected, and even cherished in the mind of every individual. Hence would reſult mutual condeſcenſion, the offspring of an habitual temper and diſpoſition to "be kindly affectioned one to another, with brotherly "love; in honor preferring one another." In the abſence of a temper and diſpoſition like this, convulſions and ſchiſm naturally take place. Old ſocieties are weakened and new ones formed, and this, it is to be feared, without any advantages equal to thoſe which might have been obtained by the continuance of an unbroken connexion between their members, under the cementing influence of mutual deference, affection, and eſteem.

But the peace of religious ſocieties has been frequently broken, and the ſacred character, even of religion itſelf, unjuſtly traduced, from another cauſe, viz. AN ERRONEOUS JUDGMENT IN APPRECIATING THE REAL VALUE OF CEREMONIAL FORMS AND OBSERVANCES. Theſe, under certain modifications, and to a certain extent, are doubtleſs eſſential to the economy of every religious ſociety. Should we, however,

ever, ſelect thoſe forms and obſervances which are of acknowledged excellence, is it not ſtill obvious that the real value, even of them, has frequently been overrated? And have they not been fondly regarded and depended upon, as calculated to afford a greater degree of aſſiſtance in the diſcharge of religious duties, than any inſtitutions, however perfect, are, from the very nature of the Chriſtian religion, capable of ſupplying? The eſſential requiſites for that worſhip which the goſpel enjoins are thus clearly ſtated by our Saviour: "God is a ſpirit, and they that worſhip "him muſt worſhip him in ſpirit and in truth."

So ſupremely excellent and invaluable is the ſpirit of true religion, that it gives a kind of ſanction to every thing connected with it in the minds of its votaries; and this extends to things which are in their own nature indifferent, and of which ſome may be even abſurd.

Hence, the edifice for public worſhip, which a pious man has long frequented, and the altar which he has been accuſtomed to approach, may be regarded by him with ſentiments bordering on ſuperſtition. The ceremonies and ordinances of his church, the "meats and the drinks, and the ſet-days," the peculiar forms of dreſs and demeanour, in the obſervance of which he has been educated, and which he has regarded as modes of expreſſing the devotion of his ſoul to the Supreme Being:—theſe become venerable in his eſtimation; to his eyes they appear covered with a veil of ſanctity, which does not properly belong to them. To this cauſe not only charity, but an accurate knowledge

knowledge of human nature, require us to impute a very large portion of that undue zeal which has been ſhewn for ſuperſtitious practices by many men of acknowledged piety and virtue.

But there is alſo another deſcription of men, concerning whom it may be ſaid, in the language of the ſcriptures, that they "have left their firſt love,"—"having a form of godlineſs but denying the power "thereof." They are ſenſible that they have become cold and languid in the eſſentials of religion, but they ſtill hope this will not always continue to be their caſe; and in the mean time they deceive themſelves into a belief, that they may, in ſome degree, conciliate the favor of the Almighty, by commuting their indifference to the *ſubſtance*, for a zealous attachment to the *forms* of religion. Hence they devote to God their attendance on public worſhip, their compliance with the ceremonies and ordinances of the church, their obſervance "of meats, and drinks, and ſet-days," and of their peculiar forms of dreſs and demeanour, whilſt at the ſame time, their hearts are devoted to the world.

When therefore a third claſs of men appears, in whoſe characters the pious and virtuous affections are united with liberal and enlightened views—their attention is naturally directed to thoſe inſtitutions and practices, the real uſe and value of which are miſunderſtood and overrated by one claſs, whilſt to another claſs they become the means of ſelf-deception, and motives to the exerciſe of unprofitable zeal. When theſe impreſſions induce a ſtill more cloſe examination, and it further

ther appears that ſome of the exiſting inſtitutions and practices are not merely abuſed, but that from the very nature and origin of them, their effects muſt neceſſarily be pernicious; and that even ſome of the articles of the received creed are demonſtrably erroneous; it is natural that benevolent minds ſhould be excited by theſe diſcoveries to vigorous and perſevering efforts for the removal of ſuch evils.

Theſe virtuous efforts have however, in almoſt every age, met with ſevere oppoſition.

On the one hand, the SINCERE, though in ſome degree SUPERSTITIOUS FRIENDS OF REAL RELIGION, being unaccuſtomed to diſtinguiſh its eſſence from its appendages, perceive that hoſtile views are directed againſt the latter, and under a full, though erroneous conviction that both muſt ſtand or fall together, they naturally take the alarm.

On the other hand, when the ſandy foundations of formality are thus ſhaken by the powerful operations of truth, the FORMALISTS are, for obvious reaſons, foremoſt to ſound an alarm that "the church is in danger," and by them the charges of "hereſy and "ſchiſm" are reſounded with a loud cry.

Thus the ſincere, though ſuperſtitious, friends of real religion unite themſelves to the formaliſts, and become ONE PARTY. The efforts of this unnatural alliance are oppoſed to the views and the labors of the virtuous friends of reform, who are thus marked out as the objects of obloquy, unkindneſs, and perſecution. Under ſuch

ſuch circumſtances, their ſeparation from that religious ſociety of which they had perhaps long been members, is either inſiſted upon, or if protracted by vain explanations, conceſſions and accommodations, is at length rendered unavoidable. New ſocieties are in conſequence formed, and the virtuous few, who remain in the former ones, are taught by time and ſubſequent events how greatly they have failed in wiſdom, by not appreciating more juſtly thoſe important points on which they were agreed with their pious, but diſſenting brethren, and the ſubordinate and comparatively trifling value of thoſe points on which they differed.

There are doubtleſs various cauſes to which the convulſions, ſeparations, and ſchiſms that have, at different periods, taken place among ſocieties of profeſſing Chriſtians, may be traced. But in the preſent curſory and imperfect ſketch, TWO only of theſe cauſes have been ſelected, as having their foundation in principles common to human nature in every age of the world, and as being alſo thoſe which appear to be immediately connected with the ſubject of the following narrative. It is scarcely neceſſary to remark, that no part of what has been ſtated on the ſubject of Reform, is intended to imply, either that profeſſing Reformers have been, at all times, wiſe and virtuous; or that the advocates of exiſting ſyſtems and inſtitutions, have been, at all times, more ſuperſtitious or leſs enlightened than their contemporaries.

It will probably be admitted, that the leading features in this ſketch have been unhappily realized in the

the Hiſtory of the Chriſtian Church, even during the period of its early exiſtence, and much more ſo in the various ſubſequent diſſentions amongſt the Roman Catholics, as well as at the memorable æra of the Proteſtant Reformation, and alſo in the ſucceeding diſſent of various religious ſocieties from the eſtabliſhed church, and from each other. And it remains for the intelligent Reader to form his own judgment whether the events recorded in the following narrative, do not furniſh a new and affecting illuſtration of the preceding obſervations.

AN ACCOUNT

Of the Conſtitution of MEETINGS FOR DISCIPLINE, *amongſt the People commonly called Quakers;—intended chiefly for the information of thoſe Readers to whom the following Narrative might not otherwiſe be ſufficiently intelligible.*

THE members of this religious ſociety unite, as a diſtinct body, not only for the performance of public worſhip, according to that mode which they believe to have been intended by Jeſus Chriſt, but alſo for the maintaining of a CHRISTIAN DISCIPLINE FOR THEIR INTERNAL GOVERNMENT. By means of this diſcipline, they are of opinion, that their union as a religious ſociety receives additional ſtrength, and that they are thereby enabled, with increaſed effect, to co-operate for their mutual good.

The conſiderations which chiefly determine the local meeting or congregation to which each INDIVIDUAL belongs, are ſometimes the relative number of members of which a congregation conſiſts, but more frequently the vicinity of the meeting-houſe to his own reſidence. And the rules and regulations of the ſociety are conceived

ceived to be obligatory upon every individual, who is desirous of continuing a member of it.

The members of each congregation assemble, once a month, at the conclusion of a meeting for worship; and they then constitute a PREPARATIVE MEETING FOR DISCIPLINE, except in the case herein after mentioned. The queries, which are directed by the yearly meeting to be read, considered and answered, at stated periods, form a part of the business of these meetings; the overseers or other members impart such information, respecting the occurrences among themselves, as may appear necessary; generally two members are appointed to be representatives to the ensuing monthly meeting; and the answers to the queries, together with such part of the information as may require to be communicated to the monthly meeting, are here *prepared*, to be transmitted to it by the representatives: hence these local meetings of discipline are denominated Preparative Meetings.

In some places, the members of a single congregation constitute a MONTHLY MEETING for discipline; but in other places, where the members are less numerous, the association of two, and generally of more than two, preparative meetings or congregations, within a stated district, constitutes one monthly meeting. Monthly meetings are often denominated by the names of the places where they are most frequently held; but several of them take their names from some other appropriate circumstance. In the selection of the particular preparative meetings or congregations that constitute a monthly meeting, regard is sometimes had

had to the aggregate number of members, but more frequently to the convenience and vicinity of the ſeveral congregations, to the place or places where the monthly meeting is uſually held.

A QUARTERLY MEETING generally comprizes the members reſident in one county, and it uſually conſiſts of the ſeveral monthly meetings within ſuch county. Of late years, however, it has been found expedient, in ſeveral inſtances, to unite the monthly meetings of two or more counties, in which the members were not numerous, under the juriſdiction of one quarterly meeting.

The members of the ſociety in the States of New England, New York, Maryland, and Virginia, have each their diſtinct YEARLY MEETING; thoſe members who reſide in Pennſylvania and New Jerſey aſſociate together for this purpoſe, as do alſo thoſe who reſide in North and South Carolina and in Georgia. Each of theſe yearly meetings, as well as the yearly meeting of Great Britain (uſually denominated the Yearly Meeting held in London) poſſeſſes, within its appropriate diſtrict, the ſupreme legiſlative and judicial power, in all that reſpects the diſcipline of the ſociety. And the yearly meeting of each diſtrict is independent of the others. A mutual correſpondence between them and the yearly meeting held in London, is however generally maintained, by means of epiſtles from the ſeveral annual meetings.

The NATIONAL YEARLY MEETING OF IRELAND appoints repreſentatives to the yearly meeting held in London,

London, and is deemed ſubordinate to the latter in ſome caſes. Hence it maintains a middle kind of ſtate with reſpect to its independence, of which ſome notice will be taken in the following pages.

By the ORGANIZATION of the ſociety, a communication is maintained between each general yearly meeting of diſcipline, and the ſeveral quarterly meetings within its appropriate diſtrict. A ſimilar communication is maintained between each quarterly meeting of diſcipline, and the ſeveral monthly meetings of which it is conſtituted: and a ſimilar communication is alſo maintained between each monthly meeting of diſcipline, and the ſeveral local meetings or congregations of which the monthly meeting is conſtituted.

This communication is preſerved by means of REPRESENTATIVES, from the preparative meeting of each congregation, to the monthly meeting of which it forms a part; from each monthly, to the quarterly meeting; and from each quarterly, to the yearly meeting. Each of theſe meetings is uſually attended by a conſiderable number of members beſides the repreſentatives; and at every meeting, for the purpoſes of general diſcipline, any member of the Society may attend and aſſiſt in its deliberations.

One limitation indeed takes place, which is, that in tranſacting the diſcipline, the men and the women have each their ſeparate province, and hold their meetings apart except at the ſelect meetings of Miniſters and Elders, in which both ſexes meet together.

For

For the purpoſe of obtaining information relative to the religious and moral ſtate of the ſociety, and for directing the attention of its members to thoſe points on which the care and attention of each individual may be profitably employed, both as it reſpects himſelf and his brethren, certain QUERIES and ADVICES have been framed; and it is directed that the queries ſhould be read and conſidered, and the anſwers to them tranſmitted at ſtated periods. Theſe anſwers are given firſt at the preparative meeting of diſcipline for each congregation, where ſuch meetings are held, and thence communicated by their repreſentatives, to the monthly meeting. The ſubſtance or general import of each of the anſwers to the ſeveral queries from each congregation, is compreſſed into one general anſwer in writing, at the monthly meeting; and the anſwers thus formed are communicated from thence by repreſentatives, who are then appointed to the quarterly meeting. A ſimilar proceſs is adopted once a year by the members of each quarterly meeting, for the purpoſe of tranſmitting, by their repreſentatives, anſwers to the queries, to the yearly meeting. By means of the anſwers to the queries, and of the opportunities of verbal communication which meetings for diſcipline afford, the latter, and in a more eſpecial manner, each yearly meeting, endeavours to obtain ſuch information as may enable it to adminiſter advice or aſſiſtance, according as the exigencies of the Society generally, or thoſe of any particular claſs of its members, in any particular diſtrict, may require. When the occaſion is general, advice is uſually communicated by means of written or PRINTED EPISTLES. When circumſtances occur which affect a particular meeting or diſtrict only,

then a deputation of ſuitable members, to viſit ſuch meeting or diſtrict, is ſometimes made.

The SELECT MEETINGS are compoſed of ſuch members only as are recogniſed by the ſociety in the ſtation of MINISTERS or ELDERS. And the care or diſcipline of theſe meetings is limited to the conduct of perſons in thoſe ſtations.

The appointment of ELDERS, in each particular congregation, for the purpoſe of ſuperintending the miniſtry, is made by the monthly meeting for diſcipline to which ſuch congregation belongs; aſſiſted by a committee, appointed for this purpoſe by the quarterly meeting. And it is directed that the elders be ſelected from among thoſe members, whoſe exemplary conduct and religious attainments render them beſt qualified for this important ſtation. It is their province to exerciſe a ſuitable care, that, whatever be delivered in meetings for public worſhip, either as preaching or prayer, ſhall have a tendency to edification. If any thing ſhould be delivered which may be deemed objectionable with regard to either its import, or the temper, manner, or time of its delivery, the elders are expected to adminiſter ſuitable advice to the party. Should this prove ineffectual, they are then to lay the caſe before the men's monthly meeting for diſcipline; as that is the only tribunal which is competent, in the firſt inſtance, to paſs judgment or cenſure upon the conduct either of miniſters, elders, or any other deſcription of members. But if any individual ſhould think himſelf aggrieved by the deciſion of a monthly meeting, he is at liberty to appeal from it to the

the judgment of the quarterly meeting, and in like manner from the deciſion of the latter, to the judgment of the yearly meeting, whoſe deciſion is final.

For the purpoſe of aſſiſting the ſelect meeting in the buſineſs entruſted to its care, a *diſtinct* liſt of QUERIES and ADVICES has been framed; and it is directed that the queries be read and conſidered, and anſwers thereto returned, four times a year, from the preparative meetings of the miniſters and elders, in each congregation, to the miniſters and elders of the ſelect monthly meeting to which it belongs.* Theſe queries are again read and conſidered by the miniſters and elders of the ſelect monthly meeting, and the anſwers are tranſmitted to the miniſters and elders of the ſelect quarterly meeting. And, in like manner, the queries are alſo read and conſidered at each ſelect quarterly meeting, and the anſwers tranſmitted to the ſelect yearly meeting of miniſters and elders, held immediately preceding and during the intervals of the adjourned ſittings of the yearly meeting for the purpoſes of general diſcipline. Repreſentatives are appointed in each of the conſtituent ſelect meetings, in the ſame manner as in the meetings for the purpoſes of general diſcipline. It is directed that, at every quarterly meeting for diſcipline, a report ſhall be made, that the quarterly ſelect meeting has then been duly held. It is alſo directed, that at the quarterly meeting for diſcipline, which pre-

 cedes

* In ſeveral congregations there are no miniſters, and ſo very ſmall a number of elders, that the practice of holding ſelect *preparative* meetings, is not general.

cedes each yearly meeting, a report ſhall be made of the names of the repreſentatives from the quarterly ſelect meeting to the yearly ſelect meeting: and that they ſhall be conſtantly furniſhed with a copy of the anſwers to the queries from the quarterly ſelect meeting, to the yearly ſelect meeting: which anſwers are to be held in readineſs to be produced at each SPRING quarterly meeting for diſcipline, in caſe that meeting ſhould require them.

A communication is thus maintained between the aſſociated body of miniſters and elders, aſſembled at each ſelect yearly meeting, and the ministers and elders of each congregation within the appropriate district; and ſelect opportunities are hereby given for adminiſtering, with suitable tenderneſs and delicacy, ſuch caution, counſel, and brotherly aſſiſtance, as the caſes of miniſters and elders may require. It is alſo directed that each yearly ſelect meeting ſhall regularly lay before the yearly meeting for general diſcipline to which it belongs, "a ſummary, yet clear account of "the state of the ministers and elders" throughout its diſtrict. By this, and the preceding provisions, the reſponsibility of each quarterly and yearly ſelect meeting of ministers and elders to its appropriate quarterly or yearly meeting for general diſcipline, is intended to be acknowledged and preſerved.

Thoſe readers who are deſirous of more minute information reſpecting the OBJECTS of the diſcipline, or the RULES inſtituted for effecting them, are referred to "*Extracts from the minutes and advices of the yearly* "*meeting of friends held in London*;"—"*A brief ac-*"*count of the riſe and progreſs of the people called* "*quakers*,

" *quakers, by William Penn*;"—" *A ſummary of the* " *hiſtory, doctrine, and diſcipline of friends*;" *Or* " *A* " *Hiſtory of the riſe and progress of the people called Qua-* " *kers, in Ireland, began by Thomas Wight, and conti-* " *nued by John Rutty, M. D.*"

And, in order to ſhew the eſtimation in which the ORIGIN and IMPORTANCE of the diſcipline *continues to be held* by the ſociety, the following paragraph, being the introduction to the chapter on " Diſcipline and " meetings of diſcipline," and iſſued in 1675, is here inſerted from the " *Extracts from the minutes and ad-* " *vices of the yearly meeting*," compiled and publiſhed in 1802.

" It is our judgment and teſtimony, *in the word of* " *God's wisdom*, that the riſe and practice, ſetting up " and eſtabliſhment, of men's and women's meetings, " in the church of Chriſt, in this our generation, *is* " *according to the mind and council of God, and done* " *in the ordering and leading of his eternal ſpirit*; and " that it is the duty of all friends and brethren *in* " *the power of God*, in all parts, to be diligent there- " in, and to encourage and further each other in that " bleſſed work, and particularly that friends and bre- " thren in their reſpective counties, encourage their " faithful and grave women in the ſettlement of the " ſaid meetings." *Page* 42.

NARRATIVE OF EVENTS, &c.

THE repreſentative national meetings of the people called Quakers in Ireland, firſt began in 1670. Theſe meetings were regularly held twice a year, and were hence denominated "THE NATIONAL HALF YEAR'S "MEETINGS OF IRELAND." They were compoſed of repreſentatives, and other members of the ſociety, from the three quarterly meetings, in the provinces of ULSTER, LEINSTER, and MUNSTER; there being only a few members of the ſociety in CONNAUGHT, who conſtitute one ſmall meeting, which is joined to the quarterly meeting of Leinſter.

No very material changes appear to have taken place in the diſcipline of the ſociety, for more than a century after the eſtabliſhment of the national half year's meetings.

In the fifth month, 1791, the QUERIES and ADVICES

VICES framed for the uſe of meetings of diſcipline,* having been reviſed by the direction of the yearly meeting, held in London, they were new modelled and arranged, under diſtinct heads. Directions were alſo then given, preſcribing the times at which theſe queries and advices were to be read and conſidered in the ſeveral meetings for diſcipline; and to the whole, the following minute was prefixed.

"It is agreed, that the queries ſhall be anſwered "at the *times*, and in the *manner* directed; and that "*no others* be uſed *without the leave* of this meeting."

In the eleventh month of the ſame year, the national half year's meeting of Ireland was held at Dublin; and to this meeting was tranſmitted, from the preceding yearly meeting, held in London, (according to the uſual practice on ſuch occaſions) a copy of the *ſaid minute*, and of the newly arranged queries and advices, together with directions concerning the uſe of them.†

Although much brotherly regard had been always felt, and a cordial intercourſe uniformly maintained, between the yearly meeting of Great Britain, and the national half year's meeting of Ireland, yet it had never

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* See page 17.

† Theſe queries and advices are publiſhed in the book of "Extracts from the minutes and advices of the yearly meeting of Friends, held in London," under the head QUERIES. For a brief ſketch of their hiſtory, ſee Appendix, No. I.

ver been admitted by the latter, that the ſociety in Ireland were amenable, in matters of diſcipline, to the yearly meeting of Great Britain; and ſome doubts were therefore entertained, whether the prohibitory injunction, contained in the *ſaid minute*, ought to extend to Ireland.

The ſubject was, in conſequence, diſcuſſed at the national half year's meeting, aſſembled at this time; and as its members concurred with their brethren in Great Britain, in a ſtrong deſire of uniformity throughout the ſociety, the queries and advices, as arranged by the late yearly meeting held in London, were adopted and recommended to general uſe in Ireland.

This compliance of the ſociety in Ireland, with the recommendations of their brethren in Great Britain, led to a conſideration of the expediency of diſcontinuing the provincial meetings for diſcipline, held once in every ſix weeks, and thence denominated SIX WEEKS' MEETINGS.

Theſe meetings had for many years been almoſt peculiar to Ireland, where they were firſt eſtabliſhed, ſo long ſince as the year 1668, prior to the exiſtence of either monthly, quarterly, or the national half year's meetings; and of late they had been regarded as a kind of intermediate quarterly meetings.

If the newly arranged queries were to be read at thoſe times only, which had been preſcribed by the late yearly meeting held in London, it muſt of courſe preclude

preclude their being introduced at the ſix weeks' meetings in Ireland. This circumſtance, concurring with a deſire of uniformity in the practice of the ſociety, it was recommended by the national half year's meeting, now aſſembled, that *the expediency of diſcontinuing the ſix weeks' meetings*, in each of the three provinces, ſhould be taken into conſideration the following ſpring.

The national half year's meeting of Ireland was held in the ſpring of 1792, and the diſcontinuance of the provincial ſix weeks' meetings was concluded upon, as ſtated in the following minute.

At a national half year's meeting held in Dublin, from the twenty-ninth of the fourth month to the third of the fifth month, 1792.

" A committee having been appointed, &c. &c. " brought in the following report, which was read and " agreed to by this meeting, viz.

" The committee, appointed to take into conſidera- " tion the expediency of diſcontinuing the holding of " the province ſix weeks' meetings, report, that they " met, in company with ſundry women-friends, and " after a ſeaſon of humble waiting for the influ- " ence of truth upon their ſpirits, the matter was " taken into ſolid deliberation, and under this ſolemn " covering, divers ſavoury and weighty offerings and " obſervations were made ; and it is the general ſenſe " and judgment of this committee, that it is expe- " dient, that the *holding of the ſaid province meetings* " *ſhould*,

" *ſhould, for the preſent, be diſcontinued throughout this* " *nation.*

" And the committee propoſe to the national meet- " ing, preſſingly to recommend to the quarterly meet- " ings in the three provinces, to take into their weighty " conſideration the ſtate of their reſpective monthly " and particular meetings, and frequently to appoint " viſits thereto as occaſion may require; and earneſtly " to recommend to friends, not to conſider the diſcon- " tinuance of our province ſix weeks' meetings, as an " opportunity given to be more at leiſure to attend to " their temporal affairs; but that friends in the ſundry " quarters, who have the cauſe of truth at heart, " keep in view *the low ſtate of things amongſt us*, not " only in their own particular ſituation, but to extend " their proſpect to neighbouring meetings and pro- " vinces; feel deeply after the pointings of truth; and " in ſympathy with their exerciſed brethren, go and " ſit with them in their monthly and quarterly meet- " ings. We believe that ſuch movements would tend " much to mutual help and edification.

" And the ſaid committee, having conſidered the " expediency of an *uniform mode of holding the meet-* " *ings of diſcipline throughout the nation*, propoſe, that " the Preparative Meetings in Ulſter province be no " longer Meetings of Record.

Job Scott, of Providence, in the State of Rhode Iſland, North America, having left his children, his near connexions, and his native land, under an apprehenſion of religious duty, arrived at Dunkirk, and proceeded

proceeded to England in the firſt month, 1793. He travelled through ſeveral of the counties in England and Wales, viſiting the meetings of our Society, and frequently appointing public meetings, at which the members of other Societies were preſent, until the fifth month following. He then attended the yearly meeting in London, and ſoon afterwards proceeded towards Ireland, and landed in Dublin on the ninth of the ſeventh month. He viſited moſt of the meetings of our Society in Ireland, and had frequent public opportunities, which were largely attended by perſons of different religious perſuaſions. But towards the cloſe of his ſervices in that kingdom, he was ſeized with the ſmall pox at Ballitore; and the diſorder, overcoming every effort which medical ſkill and the unremitted kindneſs of his friends could make to ſubdue it, terminated his valuable life on the twenty-ſecond of the eleventh month, 1793, in (as was ſuppoſed) the forty-third year of his age.

As a man and a miniſter he was eſteemed and beloved, both in his native country, where his religious labours had been frequent and extenſive, and alſo by thoſe perſons who had the opportunities of being acquainted with him in Europe. In Ireland his viſit was manifeſtly influential in producing an expanſion of mind, eſpecially among thoſe with whom his acquaintance was intimate. He was a man of ſtrong natural abilities, of ſingular piety, and of exemplary dedication of heart to whatever appeared to him in the light of duty. He conſidered religious truth as a pearl of ineſtimable value; hence he became accuſtomed to habits of frequent and ſerious reflection; and theſe habits

habits he was desirous of encouraging in others. It was his belief, and the subject of his frequent regret, that the professors of the gospel generally, those of our own society not excepted, were too much in the practice of resting in forms and ceremonies—taking up their religion on trust—depending on the labours and experience of others,—and too implicitly adopting their opinions. To counteract this tendency, and to excite a serious, diligent, and *individual* search after truth, and a faithful attention to all its dictates, were the great objects of his ministry, conversation, and epistolary correspondence. These, as well as the journal of his life, labours, and religious experience, exhibited striking proofs of a mind desirous of penetrating beyond the surface, and accustomed to original and instructive views of truth.

It has however been greatly regretted by several of his friends, that some controverted opinions, which are known to be at variance with those of his maturer age, are published, without any comment, in the early parts of his journal; and that several other passages, some of which were peculiarly striking and energetic, are wholly suppressed. Letters written by him after his arrival in Europe, and expressly stating his peculiar opinions on some religious subjects, are also carefully withheld from the inspection even of his intimate friends, from a fear that his opinions *might be misunderstood or misapplied.*

His conversations with those who attended him in his last illness, were instructive and consolatory; and a few days before his death, he dictated a very interesting letter, addressed to his "DEARLY BELOVED PA-

"RENTS,"

" RENTS," (meaning his own father and the parents of his deceaſed wife) " BROTHERS AND SISTERS, " RELATIONS AND FRIENDS." An extract from this letter is inſerted in his journal; but from caution or timidity on the part of thoſe to whom the publiſhing of that work was committed, the greater part of the following paſſage was ſuppreſſed.

" There is ſcarce any thing that makes longer life " deſirable, but to finiſh the field of religious labour, " which I had hitherto moſtly thought was not yet " done; eſpecially with regard to digeſting my journal, " and ſome other writings. Indeed it has often felt " as if I ſhould probably die in debt to the world, *if I* " *did not even make ſome conſiderable additions upon ſome* " *ſubjects, that may have been thought a little peculiar to* " *myſelf, but which I ſtill believe are as ſtrictly in the very* " *life and eſſence of the Goſpel, as I believe any truth* " *whatever*; there is not the leaſt ſcruple in my mind " about them. I truſt I as firmly believe in the divi- " nity of Chriſt as any man living; but I have no " more belief that there are two divinities than two " Gods. It is altogether clear to my mind, that that " one divinity actually became the ſeed of the woman, " and bruiſed the ſerpent's head, as early as any man " ever witneſſed redemption from ſin; and is one in " the head and all the members, he being like us in " all things except ſin. My only hope of eternal ſal- " vation is on this ground; nor do I believe there has " ever been any other poſſible way of ſalvation but that " of a real conception and birth of the divinity in " man. It is not now time to enlarge. *There are ſe-* " *veral ſketches of this doctrine in my journal, and ſeveral*

" *other*

" *other very unfiniſhed little eſſays.* I am very appre-
" henſive that moſt of my writings are far from pro-
" perly digeſted. Our views of things do not uſually
" open all at once. It is ſo in the individual, it is ſo in
" the world. *Things have hitherto been gradually evolv-*
" *ing, and it may be conſiſtent with infinite wiſdom, that*
" *ſuch a progreſſion ſhould always continue. At the pre-*
" *ſent day things are conſiderably ripening*; and I have
" not the leaſt doubt, that, before a great while, a
" highway will be opened through kingdoms and na-
" tions, where darkneſs has long reigned, for the pub-
" lication of the everlaſting goſpel, in its true life and
" authority; and what is revealed in the ear is in due
" time to be declared on the houſe top. I have little
" or no doubt, that the true doctrine of Chriſt will be
" much better underſtood than has hitherto generally
" been the caſe: I may poſſibly be reſtored to contri-
" bute my ſmall mite towards it: In this and all
" things elſe, I am not ſenſible of any wiſh but that
" the divine will may be done: I have no wiſh any
" thing of mine ſhould appear in print but from a
" probability of uſefulneſs. I have thought a conſi-
" derable part of the journal might be in ſome degree
" uſeful to ſome minds; but I ſubmit all to the careful
" inſpection, correction, and determination of my
" friends."

On the day after he had dictated the preceding letter, he made a further addition to it, which concludes with the following paſſage:

" Let my children be engaged in ſome innocent
" employments; as much as well may be out of the
" way

" way of a great deal of temptation; and, if I had " need to add it, out of the way of very great accu- " mulation; and yet, through induſtry and perſeve- " rance, moderately productive. My very ſoul abhors " the idea, that a Chriſtian can ever be at liberty, " whilſt under the influence of heavenly good, to ſeek " or even deſire much wealth; though this diſpoſition, " in direct oppoſition to the life and doctrine of Chriſt, " has gone far towards the deſtruction of true ſpiritual " religion, I believe, in almoſt every religious ſociety " in the world."

Towards the cloſe of his illneſs, the extreme oppreſſion of the diſorder upon his lungs, produced ſevere bodily pain; and under the preſſure of this, about three hours before his departure, he thus expreſſed himſelf. " Make great allowance for me, my diſtreſs " is nearly as much as is ſupportable by human na- " ture." On being informed that his ſufferings would probably be very ſoon over, he replied, " If ſo, the " Lord's name be bleſſed and praiſed for ever." The very laſt expreſſions which he uttered were full of inſtruction, and ſeemed like a prophetic warning to his ſurviving friends

" The deſire of my heart is the conſolation of eter- " nity. GUARD AGAINST RIGHT HAND ERRORS, " AND LEFT HAND ERRORS; LET SELF BE OF NO " REPUTATION; TRUST IN THE LORD, AND HE " WILL CARRY THEE THROUGH ALL."

For

For ſeveral years previous to this time, *the very low and declined ſtate* of the ſociety in Ireland, had been frequently and pathetically lamented by its miniſters in their public diſcourſes; and by ſeveral of the more eminent amongſt them, in the journals of their religious labours and travels; and alſo by the ſociety itſelf, in its anſwers to the queries, and in the records of its diſcipline. This declenſion naturally became the ſubject of ſerious regret; and in order to remove the cauſes which produced it, much labor was beſtowed by the faithful miniſters and other piouſly concerned members of the ſociety, both by frequent religious viſits, and by epiſtolary advices and communications. Theſe ſervices were doubtleſs bleſſed to the help and encouragement of many individuals; yet it appears that the ſociety was far from conceiving that its members generally were experiencing an advancement in piety and virtue; and indeed the complaints of the contrary were repeatedly expreſſed in very ſtrong and impreſſive language. *

* Among numerous quotations that might be ſtated in confirmation of this remark, the following extract is inſerted from the Memoirs of the Life of James Gough, who died the ſixth of the tenth month, 1780, aged 67, and a miniſter forty-one years:

" Now leaving Ireland, after having ſojourned there " about twenty-four years, and received much affection and " kindneſs from many friends there, of which I hope to re- " tain the grateful remembrance as long as my memory ſhall " continue, let me review the ſtate of our ſociety there, dur- " ing that ſpace of time.

" At

The following minutes of the national half year's meetings, in 1794, 1795, and 1796, are therefore inſerted chiefly for the purpoſe of ſtating, not only the information brought up to thoſe meetings on this ſubject, but alſo the earneſt deſire which was then felt by the ſociety, that ſome adequate means might be deviſed and employed, for the purpoſe of impreſſing the minds of its luke-warm and worldly-minded members with a due portion of religious zeal.

At

" At my firſt going thither, there were yet living, in moſt " parts of the nation where meetings were ſettled, ſome of " the good old ſtock, both miniſters and elders, who loved " God and mankind, and were eſteemed and beloved by " them, being kind and open-hearted, as well as faithful and " circumſpect in all the branches of our Chriſtian teſtimony, " cloſely uniting in tender love one with another in ſupport- " ing it, and keeping things in good order in the church. " Their pious care herein was like a fence about the flock, " which kept them together in nearer unity and greater " ſafety: ſo that the young people in moſt parts were gene- " rally trained up in innocence of manners, and in plainneſs " of habit and ſpeech."

The author deſcribes other particulars, and then proceeds, viz.

" In proceſs of time, theſe worthy men and women, in " whoſe hearts the love of God and his people, had by long " growth become deeply rooted, one after another finiſhed " their courſe honourably, leaving an excellent ſavour behind " them; but when they were removed, *very few of the youth* " *or others ſucceeded them in the right line, to fill up their* " *vacant*

At a national half year's meeting, held in Dublin, from the twenty-ſeventh of the fourth month, to the third of the fifth month, 1794:

"This meeting, having heard S. W.'s appeal "againſt the judgment of the quarterly meeting of "Munſter province, confirmed the judgment of the "ſaid meeting, yet taxed the monthly meeting of "Cork with too lax an exerciſe of diſcipline in that "caſe. And profeſſing to be dipped into ſympathy "and brotherly affection with friends in that province, "*appointed a viſit* thereto, for which ſervice

"JOSEPH NICHOLSON, "JOSEPH WILLIAMS,
"JOHN HANCOCK, "THOMAS FAYLE AND
"JAMES CHRISTY, JUN. "SAMUEL ELLY,
"were nominated."

"*vacant places with propriety*. Of their ſurvivors, on one "hand, a conſiderable number retained the antient plainneſs "of language and habit, and *rigidly cenſorious* of any de- "viation therefrom, valued themſelves thereupon, as if it "were the only teſt and badge of diſcipleſhip: while *their "hearts were gone after their covetousness, in eagerly pur- "ſuing, and ſordidly hoarding, temporal wealth*. On the "other hand, a large body of youth and others ſhooting up "in ſelf-indulgence, in conformity to the world, and ruſhing "headlong into the temptations of the times.

"Yet amidſt this inundation of negligence and revolt, "there remain in moſt places a number of ſincere-hearted "friends, a few worthy miniſters and elders: but within "*these twenty years past, there has been a great alteration "for the worse*"

Memoirs of the Life of J. Gough, pages 105, 106, 108, 109.

At a national half year's meeting, held in Dublin, in the tenth month, 1794:

"Account is received, that the friends nominated "at the laſt half year's meeting, to viſit meetings of "diſcipline, &c. in Munſter province, entered on the "ſervice; that they ſat with friends in their ſundry "monthly and quarterly meetings of men and women, "beſides ſundry ſittings in private families; that al- "though they found the *ſtate of things in that quarter* "*generally very low*, yet they were comforted in find- "ing a remnant preſerved in ſundry places, bound to "the law and teſtimony. And this meeting, having "entered into ſolid conſideration of the preſent ſtate "of the ſociety in this nation, and *many being pained* "*at the low ſituation it is in*, it was referred to a com- "mittee, to confer together thereon, and report if any "expedient may occur to them as an attempt to *re-* "*medy the many deficiencies obvious among us*; who re- "ported, that they met and had a ſolid conference "thereon; and agreed to propoſe, that *a viſit ſhould* "*be appointed* to the province of Leinſter. And this "meeting agreeing thereto, appoints

"JOSEPH NICHOLSON, "JOHN HANCOCK,
"JAMES CHRISTY, JUN. "JAMES ABEL AND
"ABRAHAM JACKSON,

"to viſit the particular, monthly and quarterly meet- "ings of ſaid province; and alſo ſit with ſuch families "as they may find their minds drawn to."

At the national half year's meeting in the ſpring of 1795, it was reported,—"that the committee had "nearly gone through that ſervice, and that they "found the ſtate of our ſociety, in Leinſter province, "*in*

" *in the general painfully low*; *too many being ſettled* " *down at eaſe in their poſſeſſions*: yet, that there are " a few, up and down, engaged in honeſt labour for " the welfare of the cauſe. They likewiſe had the " encouraging proſpect, that ſome, among the youth, " were meaſureably joining in with the divine viſita- " tions of truth to their minds."

At the national half year's meeting, held in Dublin, from the twenty-ſixth to the twenty-eighth of the tenth month, 1795; the ſaid committee again reported, that they had compleated their appointment; and add, " In the courſe of the viſit, we ſat in the ſundry " meetings of WOMEN friends, and are ſenſible there " are amongſt them divers well-ſpirited friends, who " we wiſh may be encouraged to come up in a more " full dedication of heart: yet we fear, that from a " variety of cauſes, *theſe meetings are frequently feebly* " *conducted*." The conſideration of which report is referred to the next half year's meeting.

At the national half year's meeting, in the ſpring of 1796, the preceding report was taken into ſerious conſideration: and that meeting appearing earneſtly deſirous of conſidering whether any means could be ſuggeſted for reviving the languid ſpirit which ſeemed, though not without many virtuous exceptions, to pervade the ſociety, with reſpect both to the diſcipline, and to religious duties generally, a large committee of men and women friends was appointed for that purpoſe. A joint meeting was accordingly held by them, at which it was ſuggeſted, that, " as each of the ſexes " ſupports its ſeparate diſcipline, for the attainment of " the

" the ſame objects; and as the rules and queries eſta-
" bliſhed for aſſiſting them therein, are, for the moſt
" part, nearly the ſame; and as, in conſequence
" thereof, they are not unfrequently employed each in
" ſeparately diſcuſſing the ſame ſubject, at the ſame
" time; it might prove a ſalutary regulation, if, in-
" ſtead of the two ſexes continuing to tranſact their
" diſcipline *apart*, they were in future *to aſſemble to-*
" *gether*, for this purpoſe, and *aſſiſt each other* by the
" *combined wiſdom of their united counſels.*" A hope was expreſſed that, by means of the propoſed *union*, ſome part at leaſt of that weakneſs in the conduct of the diſcipline, which had furniſhed cauſe for ſo much regret to the ſociety, might be removed; and that its future deliberations would thus be rendered increaſingly conducive to mutual comfort, edification and ſtrength.

This propoſal was liſtened to with much attention; and, after being ſolemnly diſcuſſed, it appeared to gain place in the minds of ſeveral who were preſent. The plan being however yet novel, and not conſonant to the practice of the ſociety in England and America, (except in a few particular places where the number of members is very ſmall) it was thought beſt not to proceed further therein at that time. Inſtead therefore of adopting the plan propoſed, for the men and women to aſſemble together, whilſt tranſacting the affairs of the diſcipline, it was concluded to recommend, for the preſent, a more frequent and mutual interchange of viſits between the two ſexes, as ſtated in the following minute:

At

At a national half year's meeting, held in Dublin, from the twenty-fifth to the twenty-eighth of the fourth month, 1796.

"A committee was appointed to unite with a committee of the yearly women's meeting, to take into "conſideration the report brought up to our laſt meeting, who were of the judgment, that a more frequent and mutual interchange of viſits between "men's and women's meeting, as friends may find "their minds influenced, would be of advantage in "the conducting of the diſcipline; as well as that "friends, both male and female, ſhould be encouraged "to mind the pointings of duty to viſit other monthly "meetings than their own:—with which judgment "this meeting unites."

The miniſters and elders, reſident within the diſtrict of the monthly meeting of Carlow, in the province of Leinſter, were aſſembled at Carlow on the tenth day of the third month, 1797, according to their uſual practice, for the purpoſe of tranſacting the buſineſs of their ſelect monthly meeting.

In addition to the eſtabliſhed queries, which are directed to be read, conſidered, and anſwered by the members of each ſelect meeting, there are alſo ſome advices which are read once a year; and it had been the practice for theſe advices to be read by the clerk at the ſelect monthly meeting held in this month. The office of clerk to the ſelect meeting was at this time filled by Abraham Shackleton, of Ballitore, an appointed elder, who had for ſome time been of opinion that

that theſe advices were objectionable. His objections to them had been ſtated in writing, and repeatedly ſubmitted to thoſe members of the ſociety, within the circle of his aquaintance, who appeared to him to poſſeſs the ſoundeſt judgment. By the greater number of theſe perſons, the juſtice of his remarks had been freely acknowledged; and this circumſtance operated with him as an additional reaſon for ſtating, to the miniſters and elders then aſſembled, his objections to the practice of reading the advices in queſtion.

He therefore proceeded to remark, "That as it was "admitted, that the rightly qualified miniſters among "us ſpeak from the immediate and direct revelation "of the holy ſpirit, it muſt be highly improper to "preſcribe to them, or to make rules for limiting "their miniſtry with reſpect either to mode, matter, "or time;—that the advices propoſed to be then read, "had a direct tendency to produce this effect;—and "that the recommending of thoſe advices must there-"fore be regarded as limiting the operation of the "ſpirit, and *teaching for doctrines the command-"ments of men.*" He added,—"that if the ſociety "was deſirous of really aſſiſting, by any advices, its "miniſters in their important functions; it could be "only by inculcating upon them the continual ne-"ceſſity of diligently attending to the pointings of the "heavenly gift in their own minds, as the one, and "the only, thing needful for their aſſiſtance. By this "means only could they become divinely qualified for "the miniſtry, *ſpeak as the oracles of God*, and "*miniſter of that ability which God* alone *giveth.*"—"In conſequence of theſe objections on the part of the

the clerk, the reading of the advices at that time, was undertaken by a female member of the ſelect meeting, who, though ſhe alſo diſapproved of the advices, yet thought that it was better to condeſcend to the wiſhes of others, who thought differently on this ſubject, than to perſevere in then urging a deviation from the uſual practice.

On the twenty-fifth of the third month, 1797, the ſelect quarterly meeting for the province of Leinſter was held at Mountmelick. At this meeting the miniſters and elders were informed of what had paſſed in the ſelect monthly meeting at Carlow: and alſo that at the ſelect monthly meetings of Moat and Mountmelick, (both of which belong to Leinſter quarterly meeting,) the reading of the aforeſaid advices had been diſapproved of. The objections were, in ſubſtance, ſimilar to thoſe which had been ſtated in the ſelect monthly meeting of Carlow; although it appeared that there had been no previous concert among the members of these three monthly meetings; and that each was ignorant of what had been done by the others.

Several members of the ſelect quarterly meeting were much diſſatisfied with this oppoſition to a practice which had been enjoined, not only by the yearly meeting held in London, but alſo by the national half year's meeting of Ireland; and which had long been regularly complied with by the members of the ſelect meetings in both kingdoms. But as the preſent diſapprobation of the advices to miniſters and elders, proceeded from perſons who were active and approved members in the execution of the diſcipline, it was apprehended,

prehended that a change in their opinions could not then be eaſily induced; and it was therefore deemed expedient by their brethren, not to proſecute the ſubject further at that time.

On the twenty-ſeventh of the third month, the quarterly meeting of general diſcipline for the province of Leinſter, was alſo held at Mountmelick. In conformity with the eſtabliſhed practice of the ſociety, certain queries were read at this quarterly meeting, and written anſwers were brought up by the repreſentatives from each of the conſtituent monthly meetings.

One of theſe queries is as follows, viz.

Query fourth. "Do friends, endeavour by example and precept to train up their children, ſervants, "and thoſe under their care, in a religious life and "converſation, conſiſtent with our chriſtian profeſſion; "in the frequent reading of the HOLY SCRIPTURES, "and in plainneſs of ſpeech, behaviour and apparel, "and are the remiſs duly admoniſhed?"

On reading the anſwer to this query, from the monthly meeting of Carlow, it was obſerved that the word HOLY (which, in the query is prefixed to ſcriptures) was omitted. This omiſſion excited conſiderable emotion in the minds of ſeveral who were preſent; and enquiry was immediately made into the cauſe of it. To this enquiry it was replied, "that the ſpirit of "truth, inwardly revealed in the heart of every man, "is that alone which can, and will, lead its followers "into

" into all truth ; that a diſpoſition has appeared among " many of our members in the preſent day, to loſe " ſight of this *fundamental* tenet of the ſociety, and " in place thereof, to ſet up the ſcriptures and affix an " *undue* value on them ; that the diſtinguiſhing of " them by the term HOLY, has a tendency to exalt " them in our eſtimation, as highly as the ſpirit " of truth itſelf; that this is an evil againſt which " the ſociety has always been deſirous of eſpecially " guarding ; and, in conſequence of which, it has " iſſued advices, and ſanctioned publications, framed " for this expreſs purpoſe ;—that many parts of the " ſcriptures are truly excellent and inſtructive ; but " there are other parts, which cannot with pro- " priety be regarded as either authentic, or inſtructive " to the general claſs of readers ;— that there are " ſome paſſages which it would be extremely diffi- " cult, if not impoſſible, to reconcile to, or render " conſiſtent with others ;— and that on various oc- " caſions, in the old teſtament, the infinitely wiſe and " all perfect God, is deſcribed as acting under the " influence of paſſions and imperfections, like thoſe " to which frail human nature is ſubject ; and the " ſacred character and attributes of the great Crea- " tor are attempted to be pourtrayed by injurious " and degrading repreſentations." Theſe objections gave great pain, and were cenſured as bold and preſumptuous. It was urged that " the ſacred writings " ought to be regarded with very different ſentiments; " —that there was a divine harmony in them, and " that any perſon queſtioning their truth, ought to be " very ſure that he is therein led by the ſpirit of " truth — that our pious anceſtors, in framing the

" words

" words of the query then under diſcuſſion, had " ſhewn their opinion of the ſcriptures, by denomi- " nating them HOLY;—and that if any objected to " that term *now*, it could be ſuch only as were out of " the unity of the body." To theſe remarks it was rejoined, " that the ſetting up the opinions or conduct " of our anceſtors as limits, beyond which the ſociety " in the preſent or any future day ought not to pro- " ceed, was inconſiſtent with the liberty which be- " longed to the goſpel, and with the fundamental " principle of the ſociety itſelf;—that if the Scrip- " tures were to be denominated HOLY, becauſe ſup- " poſed to *proceed from the ſpirit of Truth*, it muſt " follow that all other writings, *proceeding from the* " *ſame ſpirit*, are entitled to the *ſame* appellation;—that " as the Society does not heſitate to believe that the " approved *writings of its own members* have been " dictated by the *ſpirit of Truth*, it muſt be obvious " that the term HOLY would alſo be applicable to " *them*;—and that if this appellation be given to the " *Scriptures* in any ſenſe which does not equally apply " to all other writings *iſſuing from the ſame divine* " *fountain of all good*, the expreſſion muſt be regarded " either as having no appropriate meaning, or a ſuper- " ſtitious one." To theſe objections it was again replied, " That the declaration of the ſacred writings " themſelves, ſtates that *all Scripture is given by* " *inſpiration of God*;—and that *holy men of God* " *ſpake as they were moved by the Holy Ghoſt*;—that " though many things in the ſcriptures were hard to " be underſtood, yet to the humble attentive mind, " whatever was convenient for us, would be made " known by the ſpirit of truth from which the ſcrip-

" tures

" tures proceeded; and that this alone could explain " the myſteries which were contained in them." It was added, " that it was dangerous to hear ſuch opinions " as had then been delivered; and that the conſiſtent " members of our ſociety could not aſſociate with " thoſe who held them." Great diſſatisfaction was occaſioned by this diſcuſſion, and ſeveral members left the meeting before it broke up, in conſequence of what had paſſed there.

The declaration of the apoſtle, *that all ſcripture is given by inſpiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof*, &c. &c. *2nd Timothy, chap.* iii. *v.* 16, has been not unfrequently adduced, as it appears to have been on the preſent occaſion, to prove that the *whole* of the ſcriptures ought to be regarded as " given by inſpiration of God." It may therefore be not irrelevant to obſerve, that there appears ſufficient reaſon for believing, that it was not, by this text, intended to aſſert that ALL ſcripture is given by *inſpiration*, but that all *divinely-inſpired* ſcripture is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, &c. &c. The paſſage is interpreted in this ſenſe by DR. BENSON, in his truly valuable paraphraſe and notes on the epiſtles:* and the ſame meaning is given to it by DR. MILL, and by other writers, of acknowledged reſpectability. The late GILBERT

* Πᾶσα γραφὴ θεόπνευστος ὠφέλιμος, *all ſcripture divinely inſpired is profitable* &c. The word (και, and) is not found in the MS. called Barb. i. nor in Clemens of Alexandria, nor in the vulgar, Syriac, and Arabic verſions, nor in Ambroſe; nor in the Scholiaſt, which goes under the name of Jerome; nor in Theodorus Mopſuenſis, nor in Pelagius and others. *Paraphraſe and Notes, &c. by George Benſon, D.D. vol.* i. *p.* 562.

GILBERT WAKEFIELD was eminently diſtinguiſhed for an accurate acquaintance with the ſcriptures, and an earneſt deſire to promote the genuine knowledge of them. In his valuable tranſlation of the New Teſtament, the paſſage in queſtion ſtands thus: "Every "writing, inſpired by God, is uſeful for doctrine, for "reproof, &c. &c." And this ſenſe is confirmed by a writer whoſe authority will probably have ſtill greater weight in our ſociety, and who, in treating expreſsly concerning the ſcriptures, thus quotes the text: "All "ſcripture, given by inſpiration of God, is profitable "for correction, &c. &c." *Apology for the true Chriſtian Divinity, &c. by R. Barclay, prop.* 3, *ſect.* 5.

Ever ſince the year 1670, the ſociety in Ireland had conſtantly held their national meetings TWICE a year; but doubts being entertained concerning the expediency of continuing this practice, the ſubject was taken into conſideration, and determined upon, as ſtated in the following minute.

At a national half year's meeting, held in Dublin, from the firſt, to the ſixth of the fifth month, 1797.

"A propoſition being made to this meeting, whe-"ther it may be neceſſary to continue the holding of "our winter national half year's meeting, a committee "was appointed to take the ſame into their ſolid conſi-"deration, who brought in the following report:

"We, the committee appointed, &c. &c. &c. "having, with ſeveral women friends, met, and we "truſt under a ſolemn covering, conſidered the ſame, "unite in belief, that the diſcontinuing the holding "of ſaid meeting, will not tend to weaken the whole-

"ſome

" ſome diſcipline eſtabliſhed among us; and we ſub-
" mit to you, that the ſame ſhall in future be diſcon-
" tinued, and that the half year's meeting uſually
" held in ſpring, ſhall be denominated the yearly
" meeting of friends in Ireland, to commence as here-
" tofore, the laſt firſt day in the fourth month.—Signed
" on behalf of the committee, by

JOSEPH STRANGMAN.

" With which report this meeting unites."

In conſequence of this concluſion, the following minute was alſo iſſued.

" As by the diſcontinuance of our winter half
" year's meeting, we are not likely to meet in our col-
" lective capacity for near twelve months, the follow-
" ing friends are appointed a committee, to meet as
" occaſion may require, to conſider of and aſſiſt in any
" matter that may ariſe between this and our next na-
" tional meeting, relative to our religious ſociety;
" and alſo, if any written communications appear from
" the yearly meeting of London to friends of this na-
" tion, that they circulate the ſame as may be neceſ-
" ſary, viz.

" JOSEPH WILLIAMS,
" THOMAS FAYLE,
" SAMUEL BEWLEY,
" JONAS STOTT,
" JOHN BARRINGTON,
" THOMAS BEWLEY,
" JAMES CHRISTY,
" THOMAS PHELPS,
" JAMES NICHOLSON,
" SAMUEL ELLY,
" JOHN RUSSEL,
" ABRM. SHACKLETON,
" ABRAHAM NEALE,
" JOHN GRUBB,
" JAMES ABELL,
" JOSEPH M. HARVEY,
" THOMAS JACOB,
" WILLIAM PENROSE,
" JOSEPH STRANGMAN,
" JAMES PIM, (*Mountmelick*)
" AND WILLIAM NORTH."

At

At this ſame meeting the nature of the connexion between the national yearly meeting of Ireland and that of Great Britain, came alſo under conſideration. In Ireland it had long been conſidered as a kind of ſoleciſm, and had repeatedly been ſtated as ſuch in their half yearly meetings, that they ſhould be in the practice of appointing repreſentatives, and tranſmitting anſwers to the uſual queries, to the yearly meeting in London, and yet that the former ſhould not conſider itſelf bound by the rules and conſtitutions of the latter. If any new rules were made by the yearly meeting in London, it was the regular practice to read them in the ſubſequent yearly meeting in Ireland; but they had no obligation, as laws of the ſociety, in that kingdom, unleſs they were adopted by is own yearly meeting. And although the rules eſtabliſhed by the latter are, in general, ſimilar to thoſe which exiſt in England, yet there are ſome inſtances in which they differ conſiderably.

"In matters of faith and principle" however, it has generally been underſtood, that the national yearly meeting of Ireland is ſubordinate to the yearly meeting in London, and that, on ſuch points only, an appeal might be made to the latter againſt any deciſion of the national yearly meeting of Ireland.* It is evident however that this does not place Ireland in the ſame ſtate of independence which exiſts between the ſeveral yearly meetings in North America with reſpect to each other, and to the yearly meeting of Great Britain. With

* See "Extracts from the minutes and advices of the yearly "meeting," under the head APPEALS. No viii, page 4.

With the view therefore, of rendering the connexion more definite, as well as more independent, the Half Yearly Meeting now ſitting in Dublin, came to the following concluſion.

Half Year's Meeting, held in Dublin, the ſecond of fifth month, 1797.

"The manner in which this Meeting ſtands connected with the Yearly Meeting in London coming under conſideration, and there appearing to us ſome inconſiſtency therein, it is concluded to annex to our anſwers to the queries, the following propoſition, for the conſideration of the Yearly Meeting in London."

"We propoſe to the Yearly Meeting for its deliberation and judgment, Whether it is conſiſtent for us to continue to ſend repreſentatives thereto, and anſwers to its queries, while we do not conſider ourſelves bound by any minutes made therein, unleſs adopted by this meeting?"

(Signed) "JOSEPH STRANGMAN, Clerk."

This propoſition was accordingly reported to the Yearly Meeting held in London, and the following minute was made in conſequence thereof.

"Yearly Meeting, held in London, the twenty-ſeventh of fifth month, 1797.

"The propoſition from Ireland is referred to the conſideration of this meeting next year."

In the ſubſequent part of this year, a diſcuſſion took place between Abraham Shackleton, and Samuel Woodcock, two of the Elders of Leinſter Quarterly Meeting, concerning the repreſentations given of ſome hiſtorical facts recorded in the Old Teſtament. The facts themſelves were admitted. But it was contended by Samuel Woodcock, "that ſome of theſe facts—"ſuch as the wars for the avowed extirpation of the "Canaanites, &c. and others of a ſimilar nature—"were undertaken by the *expreſs command of God*, in "ſtrict conformity with the accounts given in the Old "Teſtament, which ought to be regarded as a genuine "and faithful record; and that the belief of this con-"ſtitutes an *eſſential article of Chriſtian faith*" It was aſſerted, on the contrary, by Abraham Shackleton, "that theſe alledged commands of the Almighty, for "proceedings, in ſome caſes perfidious, and in others "cruel and unjuſt, were either wilful and impious "pretences on the part of the perpetrators or original "hiſtorians of ſuch tranſactions; or ſubſequent inter-"polations in the hiſtory; and that a right apprehen-"ſion of, and a due regard for, the divine attributes, "would forbid our aſſent to ſuch paſſages, as *they* "could have no genuine claim to the appellation of "SACRED SCRIPTURES." He contended, "that it "was highly derogatory to the character of the un-"changeable God, 'with whom there is no variable-"neſs, neither ſhadow of turning,' to conceive that "the Divine Being would, himſelf, act in oppoſition to "thoſe moral laws which he has ordained to be of per-"petual and univerſal obligation; or that he would "ever ſuſpend the obligation of thoſe laws upon his "rational offspring. Yet theſe conſequences muſt fol-

"low,

" low, if under any circumſtances whatever, he ſhould " command, and by the miraculous interpoſition of his " power, enable, any deſcription of men to perform " thoſe actions, which by expreſs laws and declarations " he has elſewhere forbidden as ſinful. Conſequently, " that neither wars, nor any acts of cruelty, treachery, " or fraud, nor the exerciſe of any of the angry, re- " vengeful, or hurtful paſſions, were ever either ap- " proved of, or authoriſed by the God of purity, holi- " neſs, peace and love;—and that it was altogether " unneceſſary and unwarrantable that ſuch points " ſhould be deemed *eſſential articles of a Chriſtian's* " *faith*; becauſe difference of opinion concerning them " had always exiſted, and might be expected to exiſt, " and even between men of very ſerious and upright " minds."

Theſe diſcuſſions were made the ſubjects of a correſpondence between the two Elders before mentioned; and ſeveral of the points on which they moſt differed, are ſtated under the head, No. 2, of the Appendix, which contains ſome queries and anſwers that afterwards paſſed between them relative to thoſe ſubjects. This controverſy, however, and the warmth of temper with which it was conducted, were conſtrued into a breach of unity between the two Elders, by the monthly meeting to which they belonged. Their caſe was accordingly mentioned at the ſucceeding ſelect quarterly meeting of Miniſters and Elders, and a committee was appointed to confer with them. Abraham Shackleton was cenſured on account of the ſentiments which he had advanced, and ſome blame was imputed to Samuel Woodcock, for the warmth and acrimony of his expreſſions.

At the ſelect quarterly meetings for Leinſter, in the twelfth month, 1797, and third month, 1798, the ſame ſubject was again reſumed; and as it was intimated that opinions reſpecting the ſcriptures, ſimilar to thoſe which had been advanced by Abraham Shackleton, were held by other members of the ſociety, who were alſo in the ſtation of Elders, it was concluded to ſtate this information to the Miniſters and Elders, at the national yearly ſelect meeting, which was then approaching.

In the fourth month, 1798, the national yearly meeting was held at Dublin as uſual, and it was then ſtated, that there were reaſons to fear that a diſpoſition to undervalue the ſcriptures, and to produce ſchiſm, was gaining ground in the ſociety; and in conſequence thereof, a committee was appointed "to enquire into "the ſtate of the ſociety in theſe and other reſpects," and to report the reſult to a ſubſequent ſitting of that meeting. This was accordingly done, and the following is a copy of the report of that committee, and of the minute of the yearly meeting which accompanied it.

NATIONAL YEARLY MEETING, 1798.

"On reading the anſwers to the uſual queries from "the three provinces, that part of the fourth, reſpect- "ing the reading of the *Holy Scriptures*, came parti- "cularly under conſideration, from an apprehenſion "that ſome *difference in ſentiment, from the general*

"*part*

" *part of Friends*, hath appeared, in regard to the " uſe and advantage of theſe records: and this meet- " ing feeling the *neceſſity* of our being *united* as a re- " ligious ſociety in *faith and principle*, appointed a " committee to inſpect into the ſtate of our ſociety " in this reſpect, as well as any other which may re- " gard the welfare of any other part of our Chriſtian " teſtimonies, who brought in the following report; " which being twice read, was agreed to by this " meeting:—

" The Committee, to whom was referred the con- " ſideration of the ſtate of our Society, in regard to " the reading the Holy Scriptures, report, that we " met, and in company with a number of women " friends, took the ſame into our ſolid conſideration; " and are ſorrowfully convinced that a diſpoſition hath " appeared in ſome of our Society, tending to pro- " duce ſchiſm, and to weaken the general teſtimony " and belief, which we as a people, have maintained as " to the *origin, uſe, and advantage* of theſe records.

" We are of the judgment, that this diſpoſition " hath ſpread, and extended itſelf, to the injury of " many: and without deſiring to point out theſe writ- " ings, as being more than a *ſecondary* rule *ſubor- " dinate* to the ſpirit of truth, from whence they have " all their excellency and certainty, we think it right " that *a ſtandard ſhould be lifted up againſt this ſpirit " of ſpeculation and unbelief*; and recommend, that " Friends every where be watchful againſt it, and by " example in their own families, have a due regard " to the frequent reading of them; and where any

" have

" have manifeſted opinions *contrary to the general ſenſe* " *of the body*, it is our judgment, that they be timely " laboured with, in a ſpirit of love and chriſtian tender- " neſs, to reclaim them; but if after due labour and " patience, theſe do not become *ſenſible of their error*, " but *perſiſt in maintaining ſuch ſentiments and doctrines*, " *and do not condemn their conduct*, that monthly meet- " ings, with the advice and aſſiſtance of their quarterly " meetings, proceed further, as in the wiſdom of " truth they may be directed, to *teſtify againſt them*, " *as being out of the unity of Friends.*"

The ſaid meeting alſo judged it expedient that a general viſit ſhould be paid to the quarterly, monthly, and other meetings in Ireland, and this was directed by the following minute:—

" The general ſtate of our religious ſociety coming " under conſideration, and it being apprehended that " a viſit to the quarterly, monthly, and other meetings " of friends in this nation, may be productive of uſe " and advantage, the following friends are appointed " for this ſervice, and are recommended to proceed " thereon without unneceſſary delay, viz.:

" JOSEPH STRANGMAN, " JAS. CLIBBORN, (Moate)
" JOSEPH WILLIAMS, " JOSEPH M. HARVEY,
" JOHN GRUBB, " AND JOHN MORRIS.

The appointment of this viſit met with conſiderable oppoſition, in conſequence of the apprehenſions which were entertained of its probable reſult. However deſirable uniformity of opinion on religious ſubjects might be deemed, it was evident that it did not

not at this time exiſt among the leading members of the Society, to as great an extent as it had formerly done. But whether the agitation of ſuch controverted ſubjects, as thoſe to which the national yearly meeting was then directing the attention of the Society, would be likely to *promote* this wiſhed for *uniformity*, was a queſtion which required ſerious conſideration. A failure in this point was not the only evil to be dreaded. It was feared that theſe endeavours after uniformity of opinion, would neceſſarily produce alienation and diſunion among thoſe members by whom the moſt active and important ſtations in the church were then acceptably filled. Frequent and important deficiencies in the conduct of many of their brethren, continued to furniſh conſtant reaſons for *lamenting the low and languid ſtate of the Society*; and it was therefore conceived that ſuch deficiencies were the objects to which the attention of its faithful and devoted members ſhould be chiefly directed. As their number was not large, and their ſituations ſcattered, and as they had frequently to act under conſiderable diſcouragement, it was more important that they ſhould not be weakened by diſunion. Hitherto they had co-operated with a conſiderable degree of concord and affection, in endeavouring to ſupport what they believed to be the cauſe of truth and righteouſneſs; and by their union they had been made inſtrumental in mutually ſtrengthening and encouraging each other. Conſequences the reverſe of theſe, were anticipated from the national viſit which had now been directed; and under this impreſſion, ſeveral of the moſt active members then preſent, joined in warning the national yearly meeting againſt proceeding

ceeding in that viſit; and ſtated their opinion that ſuch a meaſure, inſtead of *promoting unity*, which was the object profeſſedly in view, would produce an effect *directly the contrary*.

The two evils which the Society appear to have been deſirous of removing by the propoſed national viſit, were "a diſpoſition to undervalue the ſcriptures, "and to produce ſchiſm."

Of the latter, it might be thought that ſome proof had been given at Carlow, by the manner in which the practice of reading the "Advices to Miniſters "and Elders" (ſee page 40) had been oppoſed. This was probably the firſt time that any objections to the advices in queſtion had been publicly ſtated, and inſtead of propoſing, *at once*, to diſcontinue the practice of reading them, the regular mode would doubtleſs have been, to propoſe that the expediency of diſcontinuing thoſe advices ſhould be taken into conſideration. If the monthly meeting had concurred in deeming the advices objectionable, the ſubject would have gone forwards to the quarterly meeting. And if the latter had adopted a ſimilar opinion, the ſubject would next have come before the national yearly meeting. And ſo long as its deciſions continued to be regarded as obligatory upon the whole of the Society in Ireland, one uniform rule of conduct would prevail. But it is obvious that uniformity might ſoon ceaſe, if thoſe practices which are enjoined for general obſervance by the national yearly meeting, ſhould be diſcontinued by ſubordinate meetings, whenever any of them might diſapprove of ſuch injunctions.

Perhaps

Perhaps it may be ſuppoſed that the propoſition, ſtill pending, for rendering more definite and independent the connexion between the yearly meeting of Great Britain and the national yearly meeting of Ireland, exhibited another proof of the diſpoſition to produce ſchiſm. But there is reaſon to believe that ſuch a ſuppoſition would not be well founded. The propoſed independence of the national yearly meeting of Ireland, appeared to have the almoſt unanimous ſanction of the members of that meeting, and to be at leaſt as much wiſhed for, by thoſe who ſtill hold the reins of diſcipline in Ireland, as by thoſe who afterwards ſeparated from the ſociety; and it is certain that the national meeting now aſſembled, did not regard this propoſition as furniſhing any proof of the progreſs of ſchiſm.

The apprehenſions of ſchiſm were doubtleſs moſt excited by the opinions which were known to exiſt reſpecting the ſcriptures; and the deſireableneſs of unity of ſentiment, with reſpect to them, was ſtrongly felt by many valuable members of the ſociety.

On this ſubject it may however be remarked, that very few inſtances could probably be produced, either of religious ſocieties or of any conſiderable number of reflecting perſons, among whom obvious ſhades of difference in opinion do not exiſt concerning the USE, ORIGIN, and AUTHENTICITY of ſeveral parts of the ſcriptures;—the exact MEANING and IMPORT of numerous paſſages in them;—the queſtion with reſpect to many of theſe, whether they ought to be underſtood

ſtood in a LITERAL or in a FIGURATIVE ſenſe;—and if figurative, the particular CONSTRUCTION which ſuch paſſages were intended to bear;—the CORRECTNESS of various parts of the received verſion;—the nature and extent of that INSPIRATION, under the influence of which the ſcriptures are by ſome ſuppoſed to be written, &c. Yet theſe, and perhaps other particulars, are what conſtitute the general meaning, intended to be expreſſed by the phraſe—A BELIEF IN THE SCRIPTURES.

An exact agreement in ſentiment on theſe points cannot be ſuppoſed, even by our own ſociety, ever to have ſubſiſted among its members; and the more intelligent claſs among them are fully aware that a *conſiderable*, and perhaps an *increaſing*, diverſity of opinion on ſuch points, hath long been apparent in the minds of the exiſting generation. From theſe cauſes it would probably be difficult, at this time, to frame any creed that would receive the full concurrence of the ſociety, as to its belief in the Scriptures, unleſs ſuch creed were expreſſed in general terms, admitting of a conſiderable diverſity of opinion on the ſubordinate points. Indeed, it is not eaſy to conceive an attempt more likely to become a fruitful ſubject of diſſenſion and diſunion; and it is therefore to be regretted, that at this yearly meeting, "*the* NECESSITY *of our being* "*united in faith and principle*" on this ſubject, ſhould have been indiſcreetly aſſumed.

It has been already remarked, that there are numerous paſſages in the Scriptures, reſpecting which it would

would be difficult to aſcertain what is "*the general* "*ſenſe of the body*;" and even if this could be done, how ſhall it be decided which of theſe paſſages are connected with *fundamental* points, or in *what degree* diverging opinions reſpecting them may be permitted, without being deemed cenſurable by the ſociety; and muſt not the determination of ſuch caſes frequently devolve on individual perſons, or ſubordinate meetings, who, *even in their own eſtimation*, would be incompetent to judge on ſuch ſubjects?

The report of the committee does not appear to be expreſſed in terms either *conciliatory* or *explicit*. Opinions, which are not therein diſtinctly ſpecified, nor referred to in any book approved of by the ſociety, but denoted by the very indefinite phraſe of being "*con-* "*trary to the general ſenſe of the body*," are in this report denounced as "*errors*," and it is enjoined, that they who "*perſiſt in maintaining them*," and do not "*con-* "*demn their conduct*," ſhall be "*teſtified againſt*," as being "*out of the unity of the body*." Might it not have been foreſeen, that ſuch proceedings would be regarded as a direct reſtraint on the exerciſe of private judgment;—that the diſcipline of the ſociety would hereby be converted into an inquiſitorial tribunal;—and that the natural tendency of ſuch meaſures would be to produce, not reſiſtance only, but even an increaſed diverſity of opinion?

It is ſtated in the report, that the Scriptures are only "a *ſecondary* rule, *ſubordinate* to the *ſpirit of* "*truth*, from whence they have all their *excellency and* "*certainty*

"*certainty*;" and it was known that they, who were ſuppoſed to hold objectionable opinions concerning the Scriptures, did notwithſtanding profeſs to judge of them by that meaſure of the *ſpirit of truth* which it had pleaſed the Almighty ſeverally to impart to their minds. Whatever differences of opinion might exiſt, between the Society and theſe ſuppoſed ſchiſmatics, on other points, it does not appear, that with regard to the means to be uſed in the interpretation of ſcripture, there was any diſagreement at all. Both parties admitted that whatever excellence the ſcriptures poſſeſſed muſt proceed ſolely from the *ſpirit of truth*; and to that ſpirit, the ſcriptures muſt always be regarded as *ſubordinate*.--Both alſo agreed in what has been deemed the fundamental tenet of the Society, viz. the *inward and immediate revelation of the ſpirit of truth*, graciouſly manifeſted to all the children of men; and that this is the *only* means by which religious truth can be rightly underſtood or profitably applied. On theſe leading points there was no difference of opinion. And with regard to circumſpection of conduct, a conſcientious diſcharge of religious duties, and even acknowledged uſefulneſs in the church—it was admitted, that the general character of thoſe perſons who were ſuppoſed to undervalue the ſcriptures, was held in as favourable an eſtimation as that of the other active members of the ſociety who differed from them. Under ſuch circumſtances, it is difficult to conceive on what ground, except that of abſolute *infallibility*, any claſs of perſons in the ſociety could aſſert a claim to ſuperior judgment; and thence proceed to "cenſure and teſtify againſt" their brethren who differed

fered from them in matters of opinion; whilſt both the parties equally profeſſed their full belief in the divine law written on the heart, as the fountain from which their opinions had been derived, and as the ſtandard by which the truth and value of them were to be eſtimated.

Uniformity of opinion on points like theſe, may be regarded as not *poſſible to be attained* among the members of any reflecting ſociety: and conſequently cannot be the object of the Supreme Being, in his moral government of the world. It ought not therefore to be haſtily aſſumed, that *diverſity of opinion* is, *in itſelf*, an evil, or that it has any *neceſſary* tendency to produce evil.

The diſcuſſion of controverted opinions, even on abſtract and ſpeculative ſubjects, may indeed be ſometimes aſſigned as the *proximate* cauſe of ſtrife and uncharitableneſs in religious ſocieties, even when the advocates of ſuch opinions are men of ſerious and upright minds. If the opinions which are delivered can be clearly demonſtrated to be *erroneous*, ſurely ſtrife and uncharitableneſs are not *neceſſary* conſequences of the diſcuſſion. If the opinions are ſatisfactorily proved to be *true*, then no evils whatever ought to reſult from the diſcuſſion. And if they, who have adopted the ſentiment, that diverſity of opinion is in itſelf *neceſſarily* an evil, and who are incited, by the uneaſineſs which they feel from the apprehended prevalence of this evil, to increaſed activity in oppoſing what they deem heterodox, would ſeriouſly and honeſtly examine their

their own hearts, they would perhaps find reaſon to doubt whether the uneaſineſs which they feel does really proceed from a *pure and predominant love of truth*. Perhaps they might then diſcover that—*not diverſity of opinion*—but *ſelf-love*, operating under the ſemblance of religious zeal, and jealous of a decline in the reputation or conſequence of the peculiar opinions of their ſect—is the *real and efficient cauſe* of thoſe evils which are ſometimes attendant upon the diſcuſſion of controverted queſtions. If individuals feel, that from time, circumſtances and habit, the intereſts of their ſect have become interwoven, and almoſt identified with their own; and if they would admit that they are not wholly redeemed from the dominion of a ſelfiſh and worldly ſpirit; it might perhaps be hoped that they would be convinced, that in whatever degree the love of ſelf, and of perſonal power, reputation, and aggrandiſement, predominates over an active deſire of the happineſs and improvement of mankind—in the ſame degree will an attachment to the reputation and the conſequence of their peculiar opinions predominate over a deſire of promoting truth.*

By

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* Some very inſtructive obſervations on this ſubject are given by Samuel Clarke, D. D. in his Sermons, vol. i. page 420, No. 68, and page 704, No. 111.

The ſervices which this truly pious and eminently learned divine has rendered to the cauſe of genuine religion, have juſtly entitled him to the grateful regard of poſterity. To the religiouſly diſpoſed youth of our ſociety, his works would furniſh an invaluable fund of important knowledge, on the moſt intereſting of all ſubjects that can employ the human mind,

By ſuch perſons, *diverſity of opinion* is naturally regarded as one of the enemies of truth; and though benevolence will ſympathize in the pain which they hence ſuffer, yet if they were willing to combat this enemy with no weapons but thoſe of reaſon and perſuaſion; or if, attentive only to the influence of *example*, they could be content, "with *well-doing* to put to ſilence the ignorance of fooliſh men,"* the very interest they feel on behalf of their peculiar opinions, would become ſubſervient to the cauſe of truth.

On the one hand, as a majority of the national yearly meeting was deſirous of checking the progreſs of thoſe opinions which appeared to it to be erroneous, perhaps the moſt eligible means would have been by the *circulation of judicious publications*. But it is probable the majority believed that its object would be better attained by *verbal communication*, and hence reſulted the appointment of a *committee to viſit the nation*.

On the other hand, they who diſapproved of this appointment, conceived that it was obviouſly not the *primary* object of thoſe with whom the propoſed viſit had originated, that the importance of a more diligent attention to the fundamental principle of the Society, as the only unerring guide in all that reſpects faith and conduct, ſhould be inculcated upon the minds of the perſons to be viſited. They were of opinion that the

* 1 Peter chap. ii. v. 15.

the temper and ſpirit in which their brethren were then acting, and alſo the tenor of the report which had been brought in by the committee, furniſhed ſufficient cauſe for believing that the propoſed national viſit had proceeded from a diſpoſition to ſearch out hereſy, rather than from an enlightened zeal to apply efficient and ſalutary means for the diffuſion of religious truth. They were apprehenſive that the propoſed viſit would be regarded in this light alſo by the ſubordinate meetings; and that for theſe reaſons, the meaſure was not likely to promote either unity in matters of opinion, or the far more deſirable object of "following after things which make for peace, and things "wherewith one may edify another."*

In connexion with this ſubject it may not be unſeaſonable to introduce a quotation from Iſaac Pennington, on "the authority and government which Chriſt "excluded out of his church; and concerning the "true church government." His opinions on this important ſubject are peculiarly applicable to the preſent times; and the following paſſage, as well as the whole of the chapter from whence it is extracted, are recommended to the attentive peruſal of the ſerious reader.

"And ſo the Apoſtle warns believers, to take heed "of drawing one another on too faſt, or of *judging* "*one another* in ſuch things as *ſome* of them might "have light in, others not. He that *eateth*, not to *judge*

* Rom. chap. 14 v. 19.

" *judge him* that did *not eat*, and he that *did not eat*,
" not to *judge him* that *did eat*. Yea, in matters of
" worſhip he that *obſerved* a day, and *kept* a ſabbath,
" not to *judge* him that *obſerved not* a day or *kept not*
" a ſabbath: for the Jews which were truly converted,
" were yet hard to be drawn off from the obſervation
" of their ſabbath, and could hardly bear with the
" believing Gentiles, who were never taught to keep
" their ſabbath with them, but were taught to eſteem
" every day, and ſanctify it to the Lord, Rom. xiv.
" 5. And thoſe who eſteemed every day, and dedi-
" cated it to the Lord (ceaſing from ſin, and reſting
" to him: for under the goſpel we are not to ſet up a
" new type, but to enter by faith into the true reſt,
" which is the ſubſtance of what the other ſignified,)
" could hardly bear with them who obſerved a day.—
" Even in the apoſtles' days, Chriſtians were too apt
" to ſtrive after a *wrong unity* and *uniformity* in outward
" practices and obſervations, and to *judge one another*
" *unrighteouſly* in theſe things. And mark, it is not
" the *different practice from one another* that breaks the
" peace and unity, but the *judging of one another*, be-
" cauſe of different practices. He that keeps not a
" day, may unite in the ſame ſpirit, in the ſame life,
" in the ſame love with him that keeps a day; and he
" who keeps a day, may unite in heart and ſoul with
" the ſame ſpirit and life in him who keeps not a day;
" but *he that judgeth the other, becauſe of either of theſe,*
" *errs* from the ſpirit, from the love, from the life, and
" ſo *breaks the bond of unity*. And he that draws
" another to any practice, before the life in his own
" particular lead him; doth, as much as in him lies,

" deſtroy the ſoul of that perſon, (ver. 15.) This " was the apoſtle's rule, for every one to perform " ſingly to the Lord what he did, and not for one to " *meddle* with the light or conſcience of another, *(un-* " *dervaluing* his brother, or *judging* him *becauſe his* " *light and practices differed from his*, chap. xiv. 10.) " but every one to keep cloſe to *their own* meaſure of " light, even to that proportion of faith and know- " ledge, which God of his mercy hath beſtowed on " them. And *here* is the *true unity* in the *ſpirit*, in the " *inward life*, and not in an *outward uniformity*. " That was not neceſſary in the Apoſtle's days, nor is " it *neceſſary now*; and that eye which ſo dotes upon " it, *overlooks the one thing which is neceſſary*. Men " keeping cloſe to God, the Lord will lead them on " faſt enough; for he taketh care of ſuch, and " knoweth what light, and what practices are moſt " proper for them; but for men to walk on faſter than " the Lord holds forth his light to them, this over- " turns them, raiſing up a wrong thing in them, and " the true birth hereby comes to ſuffer, to ſhrink, and " be driven back. *And oh! how ſweet and pleaſant* " is it to the truly ſpiritual eye, to ſee *ſeveral ſorts of* " *believers*, *ſeveral forms of chriſtians* in the ſchool of " Chriſt, every one learning their *own* leſſon, per- " forming their *own peculiar* ſervice, and *knowing*, " *owning*, and *loving one another* in their ſeveral places, " and *different performances* to their Maſter, to whom " they are to give an account, and not, to *quarrel* " *with one another about their different practices!*" Rom. xiv. 4.—Pennington's Works, v. i. p. 320. 4to. 1761.

Some

Some time previous to this, conſiderable diſſatisfaction had ariſen, and was ſtill felt, reſpecting *ſeveral* friends who had been conſidered as acknowledged miniſters of the ſociety. This was occaſioned in part by the doctrines which ſome of theſe miniſters preached, and in part by an apprehenſion that the lives and conduct of others were not ſuch as became the important ſtations of miniſters of the goſpel. The diſſatisfaction was variouſly expreſſed; in ſome inſtances, to the miniſters by private individuals;— in others, by the admonition of the elders, to whoſe province the overſight of the miniſtry peculiarly belongs; and ſometimes diſapprobation was manifeſted during the times of public worſhip, by individuals declining to conform to the general practice of ſtanding up, and taking off the hat, and continuing uncovered, whilſt ſuch miniſters kneeled in prayer.*

And as ſome doubts were entertained whether the elders were in *all* caſes ſufficiently vigilant and attentive to execute the very important truſt committed to them, with becoming firmneſs and diſcrimination, JOHN BEWLEY was deſirous of ſtating to the ſelect meeting of miniſters and elders, his opinion with reſpect

* Miniſters uſually ſit with the elders or other members on a raiſed ſeat in the gallery, in front of the congregation; and the general or prevailing practice of the ſociety is for the miniſter, if of the male ſex, previouſly to engaging in prayer, to kneel down and take off his hat. The congregation then ſtand up; and the men take off their hats and remain uncovered during prayer.

ſpect to thoſe duties, which in his judgment, the neceſſities of the times required from the members of that meeting. For this purpoſe he ſought an opportunity of communicating his ſentiments *verbally* at one of their ſittings, but being refuſed admittance, he addreſſed to them the following letter:

To Friends of the yearly ſelect meeting.

The gold that's ſterling, need not fear the touch,
Gold once they *ſeemed*, but *were* they ever ſuch.

"Friends of the ſelect meeting muſt excuſe me for reſorting to a means of communication, which is only the ſecond beſt. *They* know why I have not purſued that courſe which was more deſirable.* What I have to communicate, will be compriſed in a few words. It is touching my uneaſineſs of mind reſpecting what is called miniſtry. I really doubt, and cannot ſay in conſcience, that I believe, we have any real ſpiritual goſpel miniſtry amongſt us. I acknowledge that I have heard, with ſatisfaction, ſeveral friends deliver what appeared good doctrine; and I thought I was edified thereby, and I am ſtill far from poſitively ſaying that they are not goſpel miniſters. They may be ſuch, although I cannot clearly comprehend

* Alluding to the obſtruction given to his communicating with them perſonally.

prehend it. And I look to you for an explanation of what appears a difficulty. Thoſe friends give the hand of fellowſhip* to ſuch as evidently are not in a goſpel ſpirit; whoſe lives do not accord with their profeſſions, and whoſe doctrines are not free from exception. How can this be? Do they know them, or do they not? If they know them, and have for years known them, they practice on us a dangerous deception. If they do not *know* thoſe who *ſit beſide them*, if they cannot *ſee* into *their ſtates*, it will be difficult to perſuade us, *who are at a diſtance*, that they can *ſee* or *diſcover ours*. And yet how much do we daily hear of this ſort? My heart is ſick of thoſe preſumptuous profeſſions.†

" Reſpecting

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* Giving the hand of fellowſhip does not here relate merely to the *outward act*, but to that *conduct generally*, by which ſanction or approbation is reaſonably inferred in favour of ſuch miniſters as are here deſcribed.

† It has long been an eſtabliſhed opinion that the rightly concerned miniſters of the goſpel, without any previous opportunities for obſervation, or the aſſiſtance of any external information whatever, are, whenever it pleaſes divine wiſdom ſo to aſſiſt them, endued with ſuch a knowledge of the ſeveral mental ſtates, in a religious reſpect, of meetings or individuals, as enables them to miniſter ſuitable inſtruction to ſuch ſtates. This is very ſtrikingly deſcribed in the following paſſage extracted from John Griffith's Journal:—

" The

" Reſpecting David Sands, of whom ſo much has been ſaid, I ſhall ſay but little. Search him ye elders; ſift him, bring him to the touch. If pure gold, he will not be hurt thereby. But if too great a portion of alloy debaſes his compoſition, do not, by your certificate, paſs it further upon the public as ſterling.

" The next meeting I went to was Nailſworth, where " I had cloſe ſearching labour, in teſtimony againſt luke- " warmneſs, and undue liberties. From thence to the " quarterly meeting for Wiltſhire. Being altogether un- " expected by friends there, and a ſtranger, the cloſe " ſearching teſtimony given me to bear, eſpecially relating " to the ſtate of ſome *active members*, might be better " taken, and might have more effect, than if the ſame had " come from one *better acquainted with their states.* I " always coveted *to be wholly unacquainted* with the ſtates " of meetings, by *outward information*, in all my travels; " and when, by the diſcourſe of friends, previous to my " attending them, there appeared any probability of their " inadvertently opening in my hearing any thing of that " kind, I have generally either ſtopped them, or walked " away out of hearing. But in general, friends, who enter- " tain us in our travels, have more prudence and a better " guard in theſe reſpects; as indeed all ought; for it ſtraitens, " and may give much uneaſineſs to right ſpirited miniſters, " who have a *sure* INFALLIBLE *guide within*, and therefore " have no need of any *outward guide* or *information* in " their ſervices."—*Journal of the life, labours, &c. of John Griffiths, page* 189. This tenet, concerning the gift of " diſcerning of ſpirits," (1ſt Cor. chap. 12 v. 10.) is alſo very fully ſtated in, " *a brief account of the rise and pro- " gress of the People called Quakers, by William Penn.*" chap. 3rd. ſect. 5.

——— * is a good woman, I believe; a good example, one at whom none can take offence. I object to her, only as a *minister*, and that for the reaſon before given. Her companion, as ſhe has been called, I did not expect to ſee again in the gallery. She has ſat there much too long. Where are your feelings Friends? Is there not too much among you of unrighteous condeſcenſion? And has not truth ſuffered?

"It is not of much conſequence to me to be replied to. Perhaps I may not be thought worthy of it. But my friends, the eyes of the children are upon you; to them ye are ſtumbling blocks. Whether it be more ſafe within the camp, than without it, I do not know. In which ever place, I ſhall endeavour to reſt content with having attempted to perform my duty. Farewell; I love you: and may God in his mercy give you grace to be, what you appear to be.

"JOHN BEWLEY."

Dublin, 4th of fifth month, 1798.

The peruſal of the preceding letter was referred by the national ſelect yearly meeting, to a committee, who reported that it was improper to be read in that meeting. This report was confirmed, and no diſcuſſion took place concerning the contents of the letter.

In this year, MARY BEWLEY, an elder, ELIZABETH THACKER, an Overſeer, JOHN BARRINGTON, SAMUEL STEPHENS, and ELEANOR ALLEN, all

* The name of this venerable friend is not mentioned from motives of delicacy towards the perſon who is afterwards alluded to as her companion.

all of Dublin, were viſited on behalf of the monthly meeting of Dublin, for not acting according to the uſual forms of the ſociety, during the time of public ſupplication, by David Sands, from the State of New York, in North America, of whoſe miniſtry they did not approve. The monthly meeting directed, by a *minute on record*, that none of the ſaid friends *ſhould be appointed to any ſervice in the diſcipline of the ſociety*, and it further removed Mary Bewley from the ſtation of elder, and Elizabeth Thacker from that of overſeer.

JOHN BARRINGTON has ſince declined the attendance of meetings and been diſowned.

WILLIAM BARRINGTON, of Dublin, was diſowned for refuſing to be amenable to the rules of the ſociety, principally in declining to ſtand up and take off his hat, in meetings for worſhip, during prayer.

The aforeſaid SAMUEL STEPHENS was afterwards diſowned, in conſequence of having, by his preſence, given a ſanction to the marriage between John Rogers, jun. and Elizabeth Doyle. A ſhort pamphlet has been publiſhed by him, entitled "An Addreſs to the "People called Quakers and others, on the fallen and "degenerate ſtate of Man." This addreſs appears to be written under the influence of great ſerioufneſs and uprightneſs; and the following extracts are inſerted, for the information of thoſe who may not have ſeen the pamphlet.

"Now in the firſt place I may tell you that I "never did, nor do I now, differ in what I conſider "the *grand fundamental point* on which I conceived

"the

" the ſociety reſted its faith and belief; which is the " *inward principle of light and grace*; and which I be- " lieve ſufficient, if attended to, to lead all, without " the help of any other guide, in the way they ſhould " go, and which led the early members of the ſo- " ciety right, as far as they followed and attended " to its dictates." *Page* 18.

" My faith is univerſal, unlimited, unſhackled by " *ſect* or *party*. I believe in the univerſality of God's " love to the workmanſhip of his hands, and that by " his power all things were created that were created; " and that by the ſame love and power, he ſupports " the boundleſs univerſe in all its movements and parts " to the ſmalleſt particle of matter; and if it were not " for that, the ſun would ceaſe to give its light, the " moon to ſhine forth, and the various conſtellations " be blotted out, nay, in a word, the whole ſhould " ceaſe to have a being." *Page* 13.

The preceding opinions are in accordance with thoſe which the ſociety maintain. On ſome other points, reſpecting which there is not the ſame accordance, an extract will be found in the Appendix, No. 3.

Mary Stephens of Dublin, was one of thoſe who became diſſatisfied with David Sands, as a miniſter; and although, on that account, ſhe felt great difficulty in ſtanding up whilſt he was engaged in public prayer; yet, in the firſt ſtages of her diſſatisfaction, ſhe felt a ſtill greater reluctance againſt the appearance of any thing like diſunity in the ſociety, by publicly declining

ing to comply with its eſtabliſhed practice, when any friend might believe himſelf conſtrained to engage in the awful and ſolemn duty of prayer; as ſhe felt much ſympathy with ſuch perſons. She therefore called upon ſeveral of the elders ſeparately, and ſtated to them, that "ſhe thought it a pity they did not take more "thought about David Sands." One of the elders replied, "that he wiſhed David was at home, but he "thought it beſt to let him paſs quietly away." On her alluding to a particular time when David Sands appeared in prayer, one of the active overſeers, who was wife to the beforementioned elder, replied, "ſhe "had rather he had then been ſilent." Several members who diſapproved of his miniſtry, kept their ſeats on that occaſion; and as they continued in this practice afterwards when the ſame circumſtance again occurred, they were repreſented to the monthly meeting of Dublin as delinquents; and by its direction, an appointment was made to viſit them for this offence. This induced Mary Stephens to go to two of the elders whom ſhe particularly loved, believing they were inclined to meaſures of moderation. "She intreated "them not to deal harſhly with thoſe friends who "could not comply with the cuſtomary forms, and "againſt whom no man could raiſe a finger, except for "this; and ſtated the difficulty ſhe had experienced "in conſequence of her own diſſatisfaction with the "miniſtry of David Sands; and that ſhe would have "acted in the ſame manner herſelf, if it had not "been for the reaſons before mentioned." Upon the elders

elders remarking " that their hands were bound, " in conſequence of the conduct of thoſe friends " who were diſſatisfied and had kept their ſeats;" " Mary Stephens replied, " that it appeared to her, on the contrary, that this very circumſtance, if the elders were themſelves previouſly in doubt reſpecting the miniſtry of David Sands, ſhould furniſh them with a degree of ſtrength to ſpeak to him with greater boldneſs; as it was now obvious that ſeveral were diſſatisfied with his miniſtry."

For the purpoſe of further clearing her own mind, which became increaſingly burthened by theſe proceedings, and the cauſe which had led to them, Mary Stephens concluded to make a requeſt to *all* the elders, and to David Sands, that they would meet together, and permit her to ſit awhile with them; hoping that ſuch an opportunity might be productive of mutual ſatisfaction. An appointment was accordingly made by the elders, for a meeting at the houſe of Joſeph Williams, after the concluſion of a public meeting for worſhip. Mary Stephens attended according to the appointment, but the elders were prevented from coming by the interference of ſome unforeſeen buſineſs. Joſeph Williams accompanied David Sands into the room, and informed him that Mary Stephens was deſirous of ſpeaking to him. Whereupon David accoſted her by ſaying, that " he had not any thing " againſt her; that ſhe was one of thoſe whom he had " intended taking by the hand when he came to Ire- " land;" and aſked, if ſhe had any thing againſt him? ſhe replied, " that ſhe had not any thing againſt him

" as

" as a man, but that ſhe had ſuffered ſo much in con-
" ſequence of his public teſtimony, that ſhe could
" hardly bear to ſit the meeting out; and that a fear
" impreſſed her mind, that he was not a goſpel miniſ-
" ter." He became angry at this remonſtrance, ſaying,
" that ſhe was but a young woman to take on her to
" judge; that they had elders appointed for this weigh-
" ty ſervice; and that he did not come to Dublin to be
" frightened, adding, that ſhe had been a boggled
" woman, &c." Here Joſeph Williams interfered and told David " that he ought to hear the friend pa-
" tiently, for that ſhe had proceeded according to
" goſpel order." On a ſubſequent occaſion, Joſeph Williams openly acknowledged " that David Sands'
" conduct to Mary Stephens had been improper, and
" that David had ſaid he would not behave ſo in fu-
" ture." After this ſhe ſtill continued to ſtand up when he appeared in prayer, until, in one of his public diſcourſes, he took occaſion to ſpeak much in his own praiſe, and ſaid, that ſo great was his humility, that if even a child reproved him in a right ſpirit, he would accept it. This appeared to Mary Stevens ſo manifeſtly inconſiſtent with what had come under the immediate knowledge of herſelf and others, that ſhe afterwards kept her ſeat when he was engaged in public ſupplication. Hereupon ſhe was viſited by the direction of the monthly meeting of Dublin, as a delinquent who had acted diſorderly. She therefore informed the delegates, and requeſted them to inform the monthly meeting, " that according to the beſt of
" her judgment, ſhe had acted conſiſtent with good
" order by ſpeaking to the elders firſt, and to David
" himſelf

" himſelf afterwards: that ſhe then thought it full " time to manifeſt her diſunity to the meeting; but " that as ſhe had unwillingly given them offence, " and as ſhe loved order, ſhe wiſhed to be informed " *how ſhe ſhould act in ſuch a caſe in future, ſo as not to* " *give offence to friends, and yet keep peace in her own* " *mind.*" The delegates promiſed to deliver her meſſage; they aſked her to repeat it, that they might charge their memories with it; and told her ſhe need not take the trouble of writing it. Some time afterwards they waited on Mary Stephens again; and informed her that the monthly meeting had proceeded to record its cenſure of her conduct, in not ſtanding up whilſt an acknowledged miniſter was engaged in ſupplication; and that this being an offence againſt the good order of the ſociety, ſhe was in conſequence declared ineligible to any ſervice in the diſcipline. On receiving this information, ſhe inquired of the delegates " what notice had been taken " of her meſſage to the monthly meeting, in which " ſhe had expreſſed a wiſh to be informed how ſhe " ought to have acted?" They replied " that *they* " *concluded it beſt not to deliver her meſſage,* as they " thought it would do more hurt than good, by pro- " ducing altercation." She remonſtrated againſt their conduct in this reſpect, as an abſolute breach of the promiſe they had made to her, and added, " ſhe wiſhed " when the monthly meeting employed meſſengers " on ſuch occaſions, that they would fix on men of " truth." In conſequence of this rebuke, the delegates reported to the ſucceeding monthly meeting, " that they had before received a meſſage from Mary

" Stephens

" Stephens which they had omitted to deliver." The reply was, " that it was then too late, as the monthly " meeting had come to a judgment; and if they (the " delegates) had not acted as they ought to have " done, it muſt reſt with themſelves." Soon after this, ſhe requeſted the elders and overſeers, and ſome other friends to ſtop, at the concluſion of a meeting for worſhip; and ſhe then addreſſed them, in ſubſtance, as follows:

" I hope I may ſay I love the truth, and alſo all " thoſe who love it; but it ſeems to me not an unſuit- " able time to inform you, that I diſown being any " longer a member of your ſociety."

Several friends immediately ſtood up to requeſt " ſhe would retract what ſhe had ſaid, hoping it had " been a haſty ſtep, and that ſhe would think better " of it, and they deſired that none preſent would " ſpeak of it without thoſe walls." Mary Stephens did not approve of this counſel; ſhe conſidered her reſignation of memberſhip as final; and thought it right to ſpeak of it as ſuch when occaſions ſeemed to require it.

Some time afterwards an elder called upon her to enquire " whether ſhe continued in the ſame mind?" and being replied to in the affirmative, her caſe was again laid before the monthly meeting. She was, in conſequence, viſited in the uſual manner by its appointment; and in the minute of her diſownment, as iſſued by the monthly meeting, it was ſtated as a charge

charge againſt her, " that ſhe did not believe *outward* " *gatherings* (meaning meetings for worſhip) neceſ- " ſary." When the delegates called again to ſhew her a copy of the minute, ſhe replied to this unfounded accuſation, " that ſhe had never held ſuch a " ſentiment reſpecting meetings for worſhip, and con- " ſequently that ſhe never could have ſo expreſſed " herſelf." The delegates became convinced of the injuſtice of the charge, and one of them took upon himſelf to expunge it from the records of the ſociety, which was done accordingly.

In the year 1799, THOMAS BEWLEY of Dublin, and his ſiſter, SUSANNA BEWLEY, reſigned their offices as elders; and the following is their own account of the motives which influenced them to this conduct.

" Thomas Bewley was diſſatisfied with the rigo- " rous proceedings of the friends of the ſelect meeting " firſt, and of the monthly meeting afterwards, againſt " certain perſons of eſtimable character, who thought " it right not to acknowledge the miniſtry of David " Sands, and kept their ſeats whilſt he was engaged " in public prayer. The whole of the proceedings " againſt theſe friends was diſapproved of by Thomas " Bewley; and therefore he did not chooſe to retain " his place in the ſelect meeting, the members of " which differed ſo materially from him in ſentiment; " and from that time he pretty much ceaſed to be ac- " tive in the diſcipline."

" Suſanna

" Sufanna Bewley never had any idea that ſhe was " qualified for the ſtation of an elder; but, being " preſſed to it by her friends, ſhe was willing to give " it a trial, in the hope that it might at leaſt be at- " tended with ſome profit to her own mind; but in " this ſhe was diſappointed. She had alſo ſome doubts " whether the ſelect meetings of the miniſters and " elders were held to the advantage of the ſociety at " large; and therefore ſhe mentioned her wiſh to re- " ſign the office of an elder. Her reſignation of this " office was not however accepted until after ſhe be- " came diſſatisfied with ſome of the proceedings of the " ſociety, and particularly with its dealings with " thoſe friends who publicly teſtified their diſappro- " bation of David Sands; yet this was by no means " her motive in the firſt application to reſign."

In the eighth month 1801, the aforeſaid SUSANNA BEWLEY, and her ſiſter, MARY BEWLEY, who had alſo been appointed an elder, but was removed from that office, on account of publicly manifeſting her diſunity with the miniſtry of David Sands, (page 72) ſent in their reſpective reſignations, as members of the ſociety, to the monthly meeting of Carlow; and the following are copies of their letters on this occaſion, and of the minute made in conſequence thereof.

To the monthly meeting of Carlow.

" It appears to me that every member of ſociety is in degree accountable for the conduct of the body, at

at leaſt have a liberty of ſpeaking their approbation or diſapprobation thereof; and ſuch has been the conduct of the acting part of the ſociety of late, that I think I am called upon thus to expreſs my diſapprobation and diſunity with a ſociety that has departed from its firſt principle, and is ſubſtituting formality, and an obſervance of their outward laws, in preference to the divine law written in the heart, to which we uſed to be earneſtly recommended; and will not even allow us a liberty of thinking for ourſelves; but have given us a *printed faith**, though *practical virtue* ſeems much left out of the ſyſtem Now as theſe things are quite repugnant to my feelings, and I believe to the pure ſpirit of truth, I requeſt you may not any longer conſider me a member of your ſociety: nevertheleſs I feel much love for many who are yet within the pale, and alſo charity for ſome who have put their hands to what they may apprehend a good work, and have little doubt this time of their ignorance will be winked at, and their ſincerity accepted, but this I could not ſay for all. I truſt it is in a degree of abaſedneſs of mind that I addreſs this to you, and with deſires for all, that we may be ſtrengthened to walk in the way of acceptance and peace; and for us, who have ſeen the emptineſs of mere formality, that we may daily ſeek

* This alludes to a pamphlet, which had received the ſanction of the ſociety, and was then in circulation, entitled "The Faith of the People called Quakers in our Lord and "Saviour Jeſus Chriſt, ſet forth in various extracts from their "writings, by HENRY TUKE."

divine help to enable us in all our conduct loudly to ſpeak the language, "Thy will be done;" which is in my opinion the ſum and ſubſtance of religion.

"This has not been a haſty thought, but I think the reſult of deliberate conſideration as far as I am capable of.

"SUSANNA BEWLEY."

Ballitore, ſixth of eighth month, 1801.

"I am united in the above ſentiments, and alſo requeſt to be no longer conſidered one of the ſociety, fully believing the ſame providential care is extended individually as well as collectively; that it is not neceſſary to be joined to any ſect; and hoping there will be leſs looking to ſocieties, and more endeavouring after conſiſtency of conduct and true humility of mind. This I covet for my friends and for myſelf.

"MARY BEWLEY."

Copy of a Minute of the monthly meeting held in Carlow, eleventh of ninth month, 1801.

"A paper has been handed into this meeting by women-friends,* ſigned by SUSANNA and MARY BEWLEY, requeſting that this meeting may no longer conſider

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* By this expreſſion is meant the women of Carlow monthly meeting. It has already been remarked, that in the tranſaction of the diſcipline, each ſex has its reſpective province, and their meetings are held diſtinct.

ſider them as members of ſociety ; and this meeting on conſidering their caſe, accepts their reſignation accordingly.

" Signed by Jos. Haughton, Clerk."

To Suſanna and Mary Bewley, Ballitore.

Mary Bewley departed this life in the 5th month, 1802, aged 42 years. She was a woman of ſerious and exemplary conduct ; and the ſame peaceful, humble, and reſigned frame of mind, which ſhe had been meaſurably favoured to experience in her journey through life, was mercifully continued for her ſupport and conſolation during her laſt illneſs, and at her final cloſe.

Lydia (the wife of Abraham) Shackleton, of Ballitore, and Abigail Haughton, of Carlow, both in the ſtation of elders, reſigned that office, for reaſons ſimilar to thoſe which have been ſtated in the caſes of Thomas and Susanna Bewley.

The viſit of David Sands to Ireland, the diſſatisfaction with him as a miniſter in the minds of many individuals, and the conduct of the ſociety in conſequence thereof, appear to have been influential cauſes in producing the alienation or ſeparation of ſeveral who had previouſly been active, and were regarded as reſpectable members. The opinions and conduct of ſuch perſons naturally derive additional influence from their characters and ſtations ; and hence ariſes the painful neceſſity of ſtating ſome of the grounds on which their diſſatisfaction was founded.

The peaceable principles of the ſociety have always induced a conſiderable degree of tenderneſs and doubt concerning the juſtifiableneſs of taking away human life *on any occaſion whatever*; and its members have therefore been cenſured for not being more active in the legal proſecution of criminal offenders; which in many caſes muſt prove the direct means of bringing them to an untimely death. David Sands concurred in the cenſure upon the ſociety for its ſcruples in this reſpect; and he alſo attempted to juſtify the taking away human life, and quoted, from the ſcriptures, the command of Chriſt to "buy ſwords,"—the aſſertion that "the Magiſtrate beareth not the ſword in vain, &c. "&c. In reply to the awfulneſs of ſending people into eternity, in an unprepared ſtate, he alledged, that as "no murderer has eternal life abiding in him, they "might as well go then as at any future time."

In connexion with the ſubject of criminal offences, DAVID SANDS vindicated the uſe of judicial oaths; although it was ſtated to him, that whilſt our ſociety continues to be ſo peculiarly diſtinguiſhed for its conviction, that oaths of *every kind* are forbidden by the expreſs injunction of our Saviour, "But I ſay unto you, "SWEAR NOT AT ALL;" &c. &c.—ſome deliberation appeared to be incumbent upon thoſe who were deſirous of acting conſiſtently with this injunction, before they could *themſelves* become active in ſuch proſecutions, as would render them inſtrumental to the neceſſity of involving *others* in the practice of adminiſtering and taking oaths.

About this time ſeveral friends were under a conſiderable

ſiderable exerciſe of mind, from a deſire to bear their teſtimony faithfully againſt the having any concern in, or giving any countenance to, the promotion of war. All hoſtilities, whether offenſive or defenſive, are believed by the chriſtian Quaker, to be in direct oppoſition to the expreſs commands of Chriſt; and hence it became matter of ſerious queſtion, whether the contributing to the ſupport of war by the *voluntary* payment of a tax, levied for that expreſs purpoſe, could be regarded in any other light than as a dereliction of one of the moſt important and diſtinguiſhing teſtimonies of the ſociety. This difficulty had been ſo ſtrongly felt, by ſome perſons in the more affluent ranks, that they had believed it right for them to diſcontinue keeping their carriages, rather than, by a payment of the tax impoſed on them, contribute ſo largely to the ſupport of war; and this, for the ſake of an article which might perhaps be regarded as a luxury. The proceeding ſo far however, in conſequence of theſe ſcruples, was not, in them, the reſult of light or haſty conſideration. They were aware, that if the precepts of Chriſt were thus to be interpreted in the preſent inſtance, the occurrence of other inſtances might require a ſimilar conduct; and either privation or ſuffering would neceſſarily be the reſult. They had no wiſh to occaſion unneceſſary ſuffering to themſelves, or to induce others to act as they had done, unleſs under the influence of ſimilar convictions. But feeling the great importance of the pure principle of peace and love, which they believed to be eſſentially characteriſtic of the goſpel of Chriſt, they were uprightly deſirous, that no privations or ſufferings might deter them from maintaining a conduct, conſiſtent with that teſtimony

mony which they believed themſelves called upon to ſupport.

Under the influence of theſe impreſſions, the ſubject was mentioned in converſation to David Sands, from whom it was natural to expect, that, whether he might view it in the ſame light or not, he would at leaſt feel ſympathy with thoſe perſons who had been thus exerciſed. Very different however was his conduct on this occaſion. It appeared, that his own opinions were quite contrary to thoſe which have juſt been mentioned, and theſe opinions it was natural for him to expreſs. But under the influence of them, he harſhly pronounced the ſcruples of his conſcientious brethren to be "ſheer nonſenſe;" and expreſſed himſelf in terms of great ſeverity towards them; adding, contrary to what was known to be the fact in the caſe of one of the parties, that if he had loved his wife, he would not have acted ſo as to have left her without the accommodation of a carriage.

The diſſatisfaction occaſioned by his converſation, on theſe and other ſubjects, but ſtill more by his conduct as a miniſter, induced repeated remonſtrances, as he journeyed along, from thoſe among whom his lot was caſt. In particular, at the quarterly meetings for Ulſter, and in Dublin, opportunities were formally taken by the elders to expreſs their uneaſineſs with him, and to adviſe him to deſiſt from further labours among them; but no ſatisfaction reſulted from theſe remonſtrances. Inſtead of patiently liſtening to them, and calmly juſtifying his own conduct, he diſcovered an eagerneſs

eagerneſs to cenſure others, interrogating or arraigning them for opinions on myſterious and controverted points; and, as was his *frequent* practice, *denouncing the judgments of the Almighty on thoſe who differed from him*. Indeed the diſapprobation of his miniſtry was ſuch, that when he was on the point of leaving Ireland, and, according to the uſual practice on ſuch occaſions, it was propoſed in the national yearly meeting of miniſters and elders, that a certificate of unity and approbation with his labours in that kingdom ſhould be given him, the propoſal was openly objected to by *twenty* of the miniſters and elders then preſent, and it was *believed* that a *majority of the miniſters* in that aſſembly were included in the number. The propoſal for granting him a certificate was finally adopted.

But though it is evident that the number of thoſe who diſapproved of the miniſtry of David Sands was not ſmall; yet when we reflect that their diſſatisfaction aroſe, from the conduct of a miniſter who was not a reſident among them,*—whoſe ſtay in any one place could

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* This ſtatement having been ſhewn to one of the perſons alluded to on this occaſion, he communicated the following remarks thereon in a letter to a friend.

"I cannot accord with the diſtinction which is ſtated in "the narrative between the two caſes of diſunity with a *re-* "*ſident* and with a *travelling* miniſter. The latter, if really "unexemplary or unſound, has a more extenſive field for "doing miſchief by travelling from place to place, through "perhaps

only be tranſient, and who was expected ſoon to take his final leave of Ireland, it is not eaſy to reſtrain a wiſh, that the emotions of diſapprobation, occaſioned by his miniſtry and conduct, had operated leſs powerfully; and eſpecially when it is further conſidered, that his brethren in America had ſanctioned his viſit to Europe by ample certificates; that his friends in Great Britain had repeatedly expreſſed their unity and concurrence with him; and that, by a conſiderable number of the ſociety in Ireland he was ſtill regarded with eſteem and affection.

Greatly alſo is it to be regretted, that ſimilar conſiderations ſhould not have mitigated the harſhneſs of thoſe proceedings, which the *ſociety* deemed it neceſſary to adopt on this occaſion, and eſpecially in the caſe of ſome valuable members againſt whom this was the *only* ground of offence.

The exerciſe of the rights of private judgment by thoſe

" perhaps an extenſive diſtrict; and it is therefore ſtill more
" important that he ſhould be admoniſhed and diſcouraged
" as ſoon as his real character is fairly aſcertained, in order
" to prevent further impoſition. If they who live in one
" place are ſoon to be relieved from the burthen occaſioned
" by ſuch a miniſter, yet it becomes them to remember a
" ſimilar burthen would ſtill remain to be felt by thoſe in
" other places, who were next to be viſited by him; and the
" obvious dictates of brotherly regard ſhould therefore in-
" duce the former honeſtly to diſcharge the duties incumbent
" on them."

thoſe who approved, and by thoſe who diſapproved of the miniſtry of David Sands, was equally entitled to reſpect and *encouragement*. And if no reſtraint ought to ariſe from the conſideration, that his mind was firmly perſuaded that his viſit to Ireland was a ſervice required from him by God, we ſhould not heſitate to pronounce, that it would have been the part of wiſdom, if not of duty, for him to have quietly withdrawn from that kingdom, as ſoon as it was obvious that his ſtay was operating ſo forcibly in deſtroying peace and concord among his brethren there.

DAVID SANDS arrived in England in 1795, and during the long period of eight ſucceeding years, he has been engaged, under the apprehenſion of duty, in religious ſervice among the members of our own, and of other ſocieties in Great Britain, Ireland, and ſeveral parts of the continent of Europe: and he believes it his duty ſtill to perſevere in this arduous employment.*

It cannot be ſuppoſed that he is unmindful of the important duties, which attach to the character of huſband, father, and neighbour; or that he is inattentive to the feelings which theſe intereſting relations were intended to excite. In numerous places, his ſervices have been accepted and valued, by thoſe among whom he has miniſtered; ſerious, profitable, and it is hoped, permanent impreſſions have been produced by his religious labours; and

* This paſſage is written in November 1803.

and by many valuable characters he is regarded, both as a man and a minister, with great esteem and friendship.

In obedience to the requirings of truth and justice, we have performed a painful duty, in recording those details, which appear to have occasioned mutual dissatisfaction during his stay in Ireland. Whilst endeavouring, with candour and impartiality, to state facts, we could not but feel regret at some parts of his conduct—and of the conduct of those who approved—as well as of those who disapproved of him as a minister.

Upon the merits or demerits of the respective parties, it is not our province to decide, and we sincerely rejoice that such an office is not assigned us. That the "gift of the discerning of spirits," forms any part of the divine economy, among christians of the *present day*, we see no adequate reason to believe. They who maintain the continuance of this gift, and act under a persuasion that they are themselves sometimes endued with a power of seeing into the states of their fellow creatures, may lament our incredulity and pity our weakness. But as we profess our total inability to see the hearts of others, it would be highly presumptuous in us to assign *motives* for their conduct; still less should we be justified in *judging*; and least of all in *censuring* them. Whilst we admit the *fallibility* of all human opinions, we are desirous of cherishing the conviction that this is peculiarly the case with our own. We will therefore close this subject in the words of an experienced and venerable apostle.

"For

" For if our heart condemn us, God is greater " than our heart, and knoweth all things. Beloved, " if our heart condemn us not, then have we confi- " dence towards God." 1 John chap. iii. v. 20, 21.

In the fourth month, 1799, the national yearly meeting was again held in Dublin. At the national yearly meeting in 1798, a committee was appointed to take into conſideration the ſtate of the ſociety in regard to " the reading of the ſcriptures;" and upon the report of that committee, it was recommended to the monthly meetings, with the advice and aſſiſtance of their quarterly meetings, to proceed as in the wiſdom of truth they might be directed. At the ſame meeting ſix perſons were appointed to pay a viſit to the quarterly, monthly, and other meetings of friends in Ireland. The reports of the ſaid committee, and of the friends appointed to pay the ſaid viſit, were taken into conſideration at this meeting; and the following is an extract from the minutes of its proceedings:

NATIONAL YEARLY MEETING, 1799.

" An account hath been received from each pro- " vince, that the minute of the laſt yearly meeting " on the ſubject of the ſcriptures, hath been under " the care of the reſpective quarterly meetings. A " committee was appointed to take the ſaid report into " their weighty conſideration; who reported, that " they met, and had a ſolid conference thereupon, and " find, on their inquiry into the ſtate of our ſociety in

" this

" this reſpect, that there *appears a ſufficient ground* " *for the minute of laſt yearly meeting on that head*, and " for the *rectitude of iſſuing the recommendation thereon*, " and that *ſome endeavours have been uſed to carry into* " *effect the ſaid recommendation.*

" And this meeting recommends to the ſundry " quarterly and monthly meetings, to *keep in view the* " *ſaid minute*, and extend a tender watchful care " over their members, particularly the youth, to pre- " vent the *diſſemination of ſentiments of dangerous ten-* " *dency.*

" And this meeting, on mature conſideration of " the ſaid report, thinks it expedient to appoint a viſit " to the province of ULSTER; and the following " friends are accordingly appointed, viz.:

" THOMAS TAVERNER, " JONAS STOTT,
" JOHN COURTNAY, AND
" THOMAS FAYLE, " THOMAS JACOB.

" Joſeph Williams, on behalf of the friends ap- " pointed, at laſt yearly meeting, to viſit the meetings " of friends in this nation, reports, that the viſit was " generally performed by moſt of the friends under " that appointmnnt. And notwithſtanding this meet- " ing hath been *painfully affected* with the account *of* " *the weak and low ſituation of our ſociety* in ſundry " quarters: yet, it affords ſatisfaction to underſtand, that " our friends were enabled to get through the viſit to " their own peace."

When

When the report of the committee, appointed at this meeting, to take the former report into "their "weighty conſideration," was brought up, ſome warm diſcuſſion took place. On the one hand, it was urged, that the ſtatement of the committee in 1798, was now confirmed by the report of the committee appointed at the preſent meeting. On the other hand, it was imputed to the committee of the *preſent* meeting, that they had taken up the ſubject with *partial views*;—that in ſanctioning the charges contained in the minute of 1798, they were not ſupported by adequate proofs; that they had refuſed to permit ſome of the perſons who were accuſed, to come before them, and ſpeak in their own defence, though this had been ſtrongly urged, as a point of juſtice, by one of the committee itſelf. It was ſtill contended that the report now brought up contained unfounded allegations, and the report underwent ſome modification in conſequence of this objection.

The viſit now appointed to be paid to ULSTER, was likewiſe oppoſed, as having for its profeſſed object, the unprofitable and unavailing attempt to induce UNIFORMITY OF OPINION reſpecting the ſcriptures; whilſt at the ſame time it was admitted, that numerous inſtances of flagrant deviation in CONDUCT from the indiſpenſable duties of the goſpel, and the acknowledged principles of the ſociety, continued to preſent ſtrong claims upon the attention of ſuch of its members, as had the cauſe of genuine piety and virtue at heart. It was further ſtated, that the union which once ſubſiſted amongſt the laſt-mentioned claſs, had

been

been greatly weakened, and was now in danger of being quite diſſolved; and that the painful ſymptoms of diſſention, which were then manifeſt in that aſſembly, and which had lately appeared more generally in the ſociety, were in a conſiderable degree imputable to the ſpirit which had dictated the late proceedings. The meeting was reminded, that it had before been warned that no good conſequence would reſult from the late viſit; and it was ſtated that ſeveral members were confirmed in the opinions which had produced that warning, by the opportunities which they had of judging from local obſervation and information, of the manner in which the late national viſit had been performed;—a firm perſuaſion was alſo expreſſed, that ſimilar conſequences would reſult from the viſit now propoſed to the province of Ulſter. Theſe declarations gave great offence. It was concluded, that no progreſs could be made in the buſineſs at that ſitting, and the meeting adjourned. On the next day, ſome of the viſitors who were appointed in 1798, informed the meeting that much inquiry was made in the progreſs of their viſit; and that, in their opinion, the information which had induced the national yearly meeting to direct that viſit, was well founded. It was replied, that the conduct of the viſitors themſelves had produced the grounds of that opinion which they had then given. This accuſation of the national viſitors gave great offence; and it was propoſed, that the perſons by whom this accuſation was brought forwards, ſhould incur *immediate cenſure* for thus oppoſing the ſenſe of the meeting. This propoſal was reſiſted by two reſpectable members, who declared, that they would

would reſign their membership, if liberty of ſpeech were to be taken away. Finally, the appointment to viſit Ulſter was confirmed by the national yearly meeting, and an edition of the "Apology for the true "Chriſtian Divinity, as held by the People called "Quakers, by Robert Barclay," was ordered to be publiſhed.

In a former part of this narrative (page 63) it was ſuggeſted, that even if diverſity of opinion ſhould be admitted to be an evil, perhaps the moſt eligible and effectual remedy would be by the circulation of *judicious publications*. And that this appears to have been the ſentiment of the national meeting, now aſſembled, may be inferred from the propoſed publication of Barclay's apology.

The learned and indefatigable apologiſt, may indeed juſtly be ranked among thoſe diſtinguiſhedly pious men, who have devoted much attention to the ſtudy of the ſcriptures, from a firm perſuaſion, that their value to mankind depends not on blind, implicit, and undiſcriminating aſſent, often given by indolence, lukewarmneſs, ignorance, or credulity; but that the benefit to be derived by each individual will be proportioned to the diligence and uprightneſs with which he peruſes theſe writings, and to the degree in which his genuine love of TRUTH predominates over his attachment to all *ſyſtems* and *opinions*; the beſt of which are to be regarded ſolely as her *handmaids*. And though they who thus ſtudy the ſcriptures may have frequent occaſion to *diſcriminate* and *ſelect*, and ſometimes

ſometimes even to REJECT ſome parts of them, yet the pages of hiſtory will abundantly ſhew, that it is from this claſs of readers, that we are to ſelect the men, whoſe conviction of the *general* truth, and pre-eminent value of the ſacred records, has been the moſt firmly eſtabliſhed; whoſe lives have borne ample teſtimony to the excellence and efficacy of their faith; who have been the unwearied, undaunted, and ſucceſsful champions of thoſe great principles, on which the beſt intereſts of mankind depend; and whoſe memorials furniſh a permanent and unanſwerable refutation of the prevalent notion, that a diſbelief, or rejection of part of the ſcriptures, has a neceſſary tendency to invalidate or induce the rejection of the whole.

In illuſtration of the preceding remark, an inſtance of exemplary conduct may be produced from the works of SIR ISAAC NEWTON, tranſlated by Dr. Horſley, (now biſhop of St. Aſaph.) Theſe contain, "AN "HISTORICAL ACCOUNT OF TWO NOTABLE COR-"RUPTIONS OF SCRIPTURE, *in a letter to a friend.*" One of them is I. John, c. v, *v.* 7, and he clearly ſhews, that the words—*For there are three that bear record in Heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghoſt; and theſe three are one,* were foiſted into the ſcriptures about the fourth century, to favour the doctrine of the trinity. The other text is in the firſt epiſtle to Timothy, c. iii, v. 16, where, inſtead of the preſent reading, *Great is the myſtery of Godlineſs: God was manifeſt in the fleſh, &c.* the ſame learned writer has ſhewn that the original reading was—*Great is the myſtery of Godlineſs which was manifeſted in the fleſh.* In commenting on the unwarrantable and fraudulent corruption

of

of the former of these texts, the author remarks, that, " In the eastern nations, and for a long time " in the western, the faith subsisted without this " text, and it is rather a danger to religion, than " an advantage, to make it now lean on a bruised " reed. THERE CANNOT BE A BETTER SERVICE " DONE TO THE TRUTH, THAN TO PURGE IT OF " THINGS SPURIOUS: and therefore, knowing your " prudence and calmness of temper, I am confident I " shall not offend you, by telling you my mind " plainly." (vol. v. p. 496) Again, " Let them make " good sense of it, who are able—for my part, I can " make none. If it be said, that we are not to determine " what is scripture, and what not, by our private " judgments; I confess it, in places not controverted: " but in disputable places, *I love to take up with what* " *I can best understand.* It is the temper of the hot " and superstitious part of mankind, in matters of re- " ligion, ever to be fond of mysteries; and for that " reason, TO LIKE BEST WHAT THEY UNDER- " STAND LEAST. Such men may use the Apostle " John as they please; but I have that honour for " him as to believe that he wrote good sense; and " therefore take that sense to be *his* which is the *best*: " especially since I am defended in it by so great au- " thority." page 529, 530. He concludes his letter as followeth—" You see what freedom I have used in " this discourse, and I hope you will interpret it can- " didly. For if the ancient churches, in debating " and deciding the greatest mysteries of religion, " knew nothing of these two texts; I understand not " why we should be so fond of them now the debates

" are over. And whilſt it is the *character of an honeſt* " *man* to be *pleaſed*, and of a *man of intereſt* to be " *troubled* at the *detection of frauds*, and of *both to run* " *moſt into thoſe paſſions when the detection is made* " *plaineſt*; I hope this letter will, to one of your *inte-* " *grity*, prove ſo much the more acceptable, as it " makes a further diſcovery than you have hitherto " met with in commentators." Page 549, 550.*

It is not intended however, by inſtancing the conduct of SIR ISAAC NEWTON, (and a hoſt of other names, dear to the friends of truth and virtue, might be added, if the occaſion required it) to encourage or

* In further proof of the ſpuriouſneſs of this text, it may be ſtated that it is wholly omitted by DR. NEWCOME, Biſhop of Waterford, in his tranſlation of the New Teſtament: and by DR. BENSON, in his paraphraſe on this epiſtle; and, in a diſſertation thereto annexed, he ſtates fully and impartially the evidence for and againſt the genuineneſs of the text. It is rejected by DR. S. CLARKE, who, alluding to it in his ninety-ſecond ſermon, ſays, " I ſhall not take *(it)* into conſideration " at this time, for a reaſon NOW *well known to all who care-* " *fully study the scriptures.*" His biographer, the pious and intrepid, though much perſecuted, THOMAS EMLYN, publiſhed a very maſterly and deciſive refutation of this text. And notwithſtanding a *late* attempt to defend its authenticity by ARCHDEACON TRAVIS, it has been *subsequently* rejected by DR. PRETYMAN, Biſhop of Lincoln, who, in alluſion to this text, thus expreſſes himſelf, " but I muſt own, that " after an *attentive consideration of the controversy relative* " *to that passage*, I am convinced that it is *spurious*."—*Elements of Christian Theology, page* 90.

or juſtify the rejection of any part of the ſcriptures, in conſequence of the haſty and incompetent criticiſms of ignorant, captious, or faſtidious readers. To purge the ſacred records from all errors and corruptions, and thereby to render them, what they were doubtleſs intended to be, "a lamp unto our feet, and a light unto "our path," is to perform the nobleſt and moſt important ſervice to mankind. But this can be effected only by able, impartial, and mature inveſtigation. By ſuch means the intereſts of truth and virtue will aſſuredly be promoted; for then would they have nothing to *fear* from the diſcuſſion of *ſuppoſed* error, and by the diſcovery of what is *really ſuch*, they muſt always be *benefitted*. Happily however, for chriſtians of the preſent day, thoſe parts of the ſcriptures which are of the greateſt importance to US, are ſo very clearly expreſſed, that if we are humbly and uprightly diſpoſed to the performance of our duties, we ſhall not long be ignorant wherein they conſiſt. And though diverſity of ſentiment may ſtill ſubſiſt, yet have we not abundant reaſon to believe, that this diverſity is, in wiſdom, deſigned for one of the means of our improvement; and that the fault muſt be our own, if we do not thereby experience an advancement in knowledge, and an increaſe in love?

We return from this long, but it is hoped not unſeaſonable, digreſſion; and recur to the intended publication of BARCLAY'S APOLOGY, as an antidote againſt the ſuppoſed heterodoxy concerning the ſcriptures. Now whatever be the general merits of the Apology, it may be queſtioned whether it was preciſely ſuch a

publication as the *exigencies* of the ſociety at *this time* required.

The Apology conſiſts of fifteen THESES THEOLOGICÆ, or PROPOSITIONS, and the ſubject of the third propoſition is expreſsly "CONCERNING THE "SCRIPTURES."

In this "propoſition" the author aſſerts, that the hiſtorical, prophetical, and doctrinal accounts which the ſcriptures contain, have proceeded from the revelations of the ſpirit of God to the Saints; and he adds, that "becauſe *they are only a declaration of the foun-* "*tain, and not the fountain itſelf, therefore they are not* "*to be eſteemed the* PRINCIPAL GROUND *of all truth* "*and knowledge, nor yet the* ADEQUATE PRIMARY "*rule of faith and manners. Yet becauſe they give a* "*true and faithful teſtimony of the firſt foundation, they* "*are and may be eſteemed a* SECONDARY RULE, SUB-"ORDINATE *to the* SPIRIT *from whence they have all* "*their excellence and certainty.*"

BARCLAY admitted, and there is no doubt he fully believed, that *by much the greater part* of theſe records were *divinely inſpired*; and in ſpeaking of them collectively, he makes uſe of the terms, "the "*ſcriptures of truth.*" But it was no part of his plan to recommend or adduce any evidence, beſides that of "the teſtimony and inward perſuaſion of the Holy "Spirit," in favour of the truth of the ſcriptures; or to ſhew the harmony and accordance of ſuch parts as might be deemed inconſiſtent with each other; or

to

to attempt the defence of particular paſſages which might be thought objectionable. To obviate the difficulties, occaſioned by *thoſe objections* to which the ſcriptures were ſuppoſed to be liable, ſhould have been the object of the publications to be circulated at this time; yet it muſt be evident, that *to this purpoſe*, Barclay's Apology was not adapted, as ſuch an object did not come within the ſcope of his views in that work.

In one reſpect indeed, the circulation of the Apology might be deemed more likely to *oppoſe* than to *promote*, the views of the ſociety on this occaſion. Concerning that collection of writings, which is at preſent regarded as the canonical ſcriptures, Barclay objects to the neceſſity of believing that they are a *filled canon*, and contends that all are forced to acknowledge that it "*cannot be found in any book of the "ſcriptures, that theſe books, and juſt theſe, and no other, "are canonical.*" It was his opinion, that the ſcriptures are to be regarded as a *ſecondary* rule, *ſubordinate* to the revelation of God's ſpirit in the hearts of all true believers, not only at the time when they were *firſt written*, but *in every ſubſequent age*. He aſſerts that there are *errors* and *corruptions*, even in the laſt tranſlations, which therefore need to be corrected; and he acts upon this idea ſo far as frequently to quote texts, in defence of his propoſitions, with *meanings* quite *different* from thoſe of the *received verſion*. He inſtances defects which are ſuppoſed to exiſt in the preſent ſcriptures, occaſioned by the *mutilations* to which the original writings may have been ſubjected *by deſigning*

ſigning men; alſo the fact, that but *few* perſons are now able to read the ſcriptures in the *original* languages, and that the many muſt therefore depend on the honeſty and faithfulneſs of *interpreters*; and further, the uncertainty occaſioned by the "numerous corrections, "amendments, and various eſſays of ſucceſſive tranſ- "lators, of whom the latter conſtantly blame and cor- "rect thoſe who precede them, as guilty of defects and "errors." He ſtates the difficulty of aſcertaining *which* of the exiſting manuſcripts have the beſt claim to be conſidered as *genuine*, it being admitted by all, that the *original copies* are not now extant. And he then expreſſes himſelf on this ſubject in the following terms.

"But further, the *various lections* of the Hebrew "character, by reaſon of the POINTS, which ſome "plead for as coevous with the firſt writings; which "others with no leſs probability alledge to be a later "invention; the *diſagreement of divers citations* of "Chriſt, and the Apoſtles, with thoſe paſſages in "the old teſtament; the appeal to the great contra- "verſie among the fathers, whereof ſome highly "approve the *Greek Septuagint*, decrying and ren- "dering very doubtful the *Hebrew copy*, as in many "places vitiated, and altered by the Jews; ſome "others, and particularly Jerom, exalting the certain- "ty of the *Hebrew*, and rejecting, yea, even deriding "the *hiſtory of the Septuagint*, which the primitive "church chiefly made uſe of, and ſome fathers that "lived centuries before him, affirmed to be a moſt "certain thing. And the many *various lections* in di- "vers copies of the Greek, and the great altercations "among the fathers of the *firſt three centuries*, (who

"had

" *had greater opportunity to be better informed, than we* " *can now lay claim to)* concerning the books to be " admitted or rejected, as is above obſerved. I ſay, " all theſe, and *much more* which might be alledged, " puts the minds *even of the learned*, into *infinite doubts*, " *ſcruples*, and *inextricable difficulties* : whence we may " very ſafely conclude, that Jeſus Chriſt, who promiſ- " ed to be always with his children, to lead them in- " to all truth, to guard them againſt the devices " of the enemy, and to eſtabliſh their faith upon an " unmoveable rock, left them not to be principally " ruled by *that, which was ſubject in itſelf, to many un-* " *certainties* : and therefore he gave them his SPIRIT, " as their principal guide, which neither moths nor time " can wear out, nor tranſcribers nor tranſlators cor- " rupt ; which none are ſo young, none ſo illiterate, " none in so remote a place, but they may come to be " reached and rightly informed by it.

" Through and by the clearneſs which that ſpirit " gives us, it is that we are only beſt rid of thoſe diffi- " culties that occur to us concerning the ſcriptures. " The real and undoubted experience whereof I my- " ſelf have been a witneſs of, with great admiration " of the love of God to his children in theſe latter " days : for I have known ſome of my friends, who " profeſs the ſame faith with me, faithful ſervants of the " moſt High God, and full of divine knowledge of " his truth, as it was immediately and inwardly re- " vealed to them by the ſpirit, from a true and living " experience ; who not only were *ignorant of the Greek* " *and Hebrew*, but even ſome of them could not *read*

" *their*

" *their own vulgar language,* who being preſſed by the " adverſaries with ſome citations out of the Engliſh " tranſlation, and finding them to diſagree with the " manifeſtation of truth in their own hearts, have " boldly affirmed the ſpirit of God never ſaid ſo and " that it was certainly wrong; for they did not believe " that any of the Holy Prophets or Apoſtles, had ever " written ſo; which, when I, on this account ſeri- " ouſly examined, I really found to be *errors* and *cor-* " *ruptions of the tranſlators*: who, as in moſt tranſla- " tions, do not ſo much give us the genuine ſignifica- " tions of the words, as ſtrain them to expreſs that " which comes neareſt to that opinion and notion they " have of truth. And this ſeemed to me to ſuit very " well with that ſaying of Auguſtine, epiſt. 19, ad Hier. " Tom. 2. fol. 14, after he has ſaid, " That he gives " only that honour to thoſe books which are called ca- " nonical, as to believe that the authors thereof did in " writing not err." He adds, " and if I ſhall meet " with any thing in theſe writings that SEEMETH *re-* " *pugnant to truth,* I ſhall not doubt to ſay, that either " the *volume is faulty or erroneous*; that *the expounder* " *hath not reached what was ſaid,* or that *I have in no* " *wiſe underſtood it.*" " So that he ſuppoſes, that in " the tranſcription or tranſlation there may be errors." Apology for the true chriſtian divinity, by R. Barclay, prop. 3. ſect. 4.

In noticing the proceedings of the national meeting this year, it may be neceſſary to recur to the propoſition made by that meeting in 1797, (page 49), for diſcontinuing the practice of ſending repreſentatives, and

and alſo anſwers to the queries, to the yearly meeting in London. By the latter, this propoſition was referred for the conſideration of the ſucceeding yearly meeting; and the ſame concluſion was repeated in 1798. At the national yearly meeting of Ireland in 1799, the ſubject was reſumed; but in conſequence of the ſymptoms of *increaſing diſunion and weakneſs*, which now appeared in the ſociety, it was not thought expedient to weaken its connexion with the yearly meeting of Great Britain. The reluctance which that meeting had ſhewn againſt complying with the application from Ireland, was regarded as wiſe and providential; and this buſineſs was terminated by the following minute:

Yearly meeting held in London, 5th Month 30th, 1799.

"THOMAS FAYLE, the repreſentative from Ireland, "who is now preſent, having requeſted on behalf, and "by inſtruction of the yearly meeting of that nation, "that their propoſition in 1797 may be withdrawn, "and their requeſt being acceptable to this meeting, "the ſame is agreed to."

At the national yearly meeting, held in the fourth month, 1800, the following minute was made:

"Account is given by one of the friends nomi- "nated at the laſt yearly meeting to pay a viſit to "the province of ULSTER, that moſt of the friends "under that appointment paid a viſit to the different "monthly meetings, and the quarterly meeting in that "province;

" province ; that they were kindly received by their " friends, and favoured to return with a degree of " peace in their own minds."

It does not appear that much diſcuſſion reſpecting the preſent ſtate or proſpects of the ſociety, took place at this meeting. Moſt of the members who diſapproved of the proceedings of the national yearly meetings in 1798 and 1799, were ſatisfied with the oppoſition which they had then made. It appeared clear to them, that the current of public opinion in the ſociety, or at leaſt in the national yearly meetings, was in favour of meaſures which they could not approve, believing thoſe meaſures to be—inexpedient in themſelves—an infringement on the rights of private judgment—and incompatible with a ſincere deſire to recommend to primary attention the leading and fundamental principle of the ſociety. To have been preſent, and by ſilence, induce their brethren to believe that they tacitly approved of ſuch meaſures, would have been neither open nor candid. To have oppoſed thoſe meaſures, would have induced unprofitable diſcuſſion, without producing any adequate good : and as there was no rational proſpect of benefit, either to the ſociety or themſelves, from their attendance in meetings of diſcipline, ſome of theſe perſons had already declined the attendance of thoſe meetings, and others were faſt verging to a ſimilar conduct.

But although the *orthodox* members were now generally left to purſue their own meaſures, in matters of diſcipline, yet we do not find that any ſymptoms of improvement in the ſtate of the ſociety were yet apparent.

apparent. Of this ſome judgment may perhaps be formed from the following circumſtance.

At the ſelect national yearly meeting, held in the intervals of the ſittings of the preſent national yearly meeting for diſcipline, the miniſters and elders were informed by HANNAH BARNARD, a miniſter from the monthly meeting of Hudſon in the State of New York, that ſhe had then nearly compleated her religious viſit to Ireland. And as ſhe expected ſoon to embark for England, in the further proſecution of her religious duty, ſhe communicated this information to the members then aſſembled. They appointed a committee to take the ſubject into conſideration, conformably to the uſual practice on ſuch occaſions; and voluntarily preſented her with the following certificate.

" From our yearly meeting of miniſters and elders, " for the nation of Ireland, held in Dublin by adjourn- " ments from the 26th day of 4th month, to the 4th of " 5th month, 1800.

" *To Friends of the monthly meeting of* HUDSON, *the quar-* " *terly meeting of* NINE PARTNERS, *and yearly meet-* " *ing of* NEW YORK.

" DEAR FRIENDS,

" Our dear friend and ſiſter, HANNAH BARNARD, " for whom we received your certificate, having in- " formed us at this meeting, that ſhe apprehends the " time is now nearly come for her leaving this land: " we

" we may therefore inform you, that ſhe hath viſited all " the meetings of friends in this nation, excepting " two, which it is expected ſhe will be at, before ſhe " takes her departure.

" In the courſe of her religious labours amongſt us, " we believe it was her concern, by example, and pre- " cept, to inculcate the doctrines of the goſpel, and to " excite friends to be, not only in profeſſion, but in " practice, the humble ſelf-denying followers of Chriſt. " She had meetings with thoſe of other ſocieties, in " ſeveral parts of this nation, we believe to general ſa- " tisfaction. With deſires ſhe may be favoured to con- " tinue, and conclude her religious labours in Europe, " conſiſtent with the divine will, and (if permitted " thereby), to return to her native land, and near " connexions with the incomes of peace, we conclude, " your friends, brethren, and ſiſters.

" Signed in, by order, and on behalf our aforeſaid " meeting, by

" JOSEPH STRANGMAN, Clerk."

At the ſelect yearly meeting of miniſters and elders, held in London, *within leſs than a month after the date of this certificate*, an accuſation was brought forwards againſt Hannah Barnard, for maintaining opinions not conſonant with thoſe of the ſociety; and eſpecially concerning the *divine authority for the Jewiſh wars*, as ſtated in the Old Teſtament. Much diſcuſſion took place in conſequence of this accuſation; and the reſult was, that it was the judgment of the ſelect yearly meeting, that it was highly improper for Hannah

nah Barnard to continue to travel in the capacity of a miniſter; and it was the advice of that meeting to her, to *return home*. Upon this it was remarked, that if Hannah Barnard ſhould comply with the advice which had then been given her, her friends in America, muſt conceive that there was, in appearance at leaſt, great inconſiſtency between the conduct of the ſelect yearly meeting held in London, and the ſelect yearly meeting which had juſt preceded it in Dublin; for ſhe was then in poſſeſſion of as good a certificate from the laſt mentioned meeting as any perſon could deſire.* To this remark it was replied by a repreſentative from Ireland, who was confeſſedly, with reſpect to matters of diſcipline, one of the moſt active, influential, and intelligent members of the ſociety in that kingdom, "that he could wiſh that certificate had "not been brought into view, or even mentioned, "*for the ſociety in that land was in ſuch a ſtate that no-*"*thing which came from them was of any account.*"

At the preſent national yearly meeting, ſome alterations were agreed upon in the "RULES for pro-"ceeding in relation to MARRIAGE:" and it may be not unintereſting to ſtate ſome of the reaſons which induced theſe alterations.

The

* The ſelect yearly meeting held in London, conſiſted of the aſſociated repreſentatives of the whole body of miniſters and elders, throughout Great Britain and Ireland: and the ſelect yearly meeting held in Dublin, conſiſted of the aſſociated repreſentatives of the whole body of miniſters and elders throughout Ireland.

The ſociety hath uniformly profeſſed conſcientious ſcruples, againſt complying with the modes of marriage practiſed by other ſocieties: and in conſequence of theſe ſcruples, it adopted a mode of marriage peculiar to itſelf, and preſcribed rules in relation thereto, at an early period of its eſtabliſhment. By theſe rules it was enjoined, that ſtrict inquiries ſhould always be made, whether the parties intending to marry, were clear from all former engagements in relation to marriage; and whether they had the conſent of parents or guardians. If there were children by a former marriage or marriages, a care was to be exerciſed that the children's rights were legally ſecured. And in every caſe, timely notice of the intentions of the parties was required to be publiſhed. For the effectual attainment of theſe objects, the ſociety required the *repeated perſonal appearance* and *public declaration* of the parties, in its meetings for diſcipline. The time and expence of travelling, &c. requiſite for complying with theſe regulations, were indeed in frequent inſtances very inconvenient; and the neceſſity of repeated perſonal appearances and public declarations, eſpecially by the female, was exceedingly diſtreſſing. The comforts of entering into the marriage covenant, in a manner conſonant with the conſcientious feelings of the parties; and the importance of adopting regulations which, by ſecuring a deliberate and honourable procedure on their part, might merit the ſanction of government, were, however, objects to compenſate for ſome ſacrifices: and the rules originally preſcribed, were therefore more numerous and ſtrict, than might perhaps have otherwiſe been deemed neceſſary.

In

In 1753, the Britiſh Legiſlature paſſed "An Act "for the better preventing of Clandeſtine Marriages;" and it was then provided;

"That nothing in this act contained, ſhall extend "to that part of Great Britain called SCOTLAND, nor "to any marriages amongſt the people called "QUAKERS, or amongſt the perſons profeſſing the "JEWISH religion, where *both* the parties to any "ſuch marriage ſhall be of the people called Quakers, "or perſons profeſſing the Jewiſh religion reſpectively, "nor to any marriages ſolemnized beyond the ſeas." *26th of George II. anno* 1753

The marriages of Quakers were thus completely ſanctioned by law; and the experience of more than a century, has ſhewn that they have not been undeſerving of that ſanction. Of later time, however, it has been conceived, that a relaxation of the repeated perſonal appearances and public declarations of the parties might be permitted, and produce great ſatisfaction to them, without any injury to the objects for which the regulations were eſtabliſhed. A relaxation in theſe reſpects was therefore granted, and ſome other alterations in "the rules for proceeding in relation to mar-"riage," took place at the yearly meeting, held in London in 1790; and in 1801, a further relaxation was granted, and further alterations took place.* In conſe-

quence

* The rules in relation to marriage, are publiſhed in the book of "extracts, from the minutes and advices of the yearly meeting, &c." under the head, MARRIAGE, No. 8, page, 64.

quence of these alterations, if the parties intending to marry are members of the *same* monthly meeting, only *two* personal appearances and public declarations by each of them—viz: once in the women's, and once in the men's monthly meeting for discipline, are now prescribed; whereas, by the original rules, *six* personal appearances and public declarations by each of the parties, were required *previously* to the solemnization of their marriage. By the original rules, if the parties were not members of the same monthly meeting, it was requisite for the man to appear in person, and to repeat in public his intentions of marriage, at *twelve* distinct meetings for discipline. The intentions of the parties were to be announced *twenty* times, prior to the solemnization of the marriage.* Where the residence of the man was *sixty* miles distant from that of his intended wife, and where each of their residences were *ten* miles distant from the place were their respective monthly meetings were generally held, (and it very frequently happens that the distances are considerably greater,) it was requisite *after* he had obtained her consent, and *prior* to the solemnization of marriage, that he should travel *two hundred and twenty miles, in order to comply with the regulations of the society.*† With

* These consequences, under the operation of the original rules, took place throughout most of Ireland, and in all the counties in Great Britain, where the parties intending to marry were required, in the first instance, to present their intention before their respective *preparative* meetings.

† These facts may appear extraordinary to some members of our society, especially those among whom the practice of presenting

With ſuch circumſtances attendant upon the original rules for proceeding in relation to marriage, "we

I

"cannot

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preſenting intentions of marriage in *preparative* meetings did not exiſt. The following illuſtration is therefore annexed:

Each of the parties intending to marry, is ſuppoſed to have belonged to a diſtinct monthly meeting. In this caſe it was required that they ſhould proceed as follows:

The man to declare publicly his intentions of marriage,

		Publications.	Miles.
At the preparative meeting to which he belonged.	before the women's meeting for diſcipline	1	
	men's do. - - -	1	
At the monthly meeting to which he belonged.	women's meeting do. - - -	1	20
	men's do. - - -	1	
	women's do a 2nd time	1	20
	men's do. do.	1	

The man and the woman each *to declare publicly their respective intentions,*

At the preparative meeting to which ſhe belonged.	before the women's meeting for diſcipline,	2	100
	men's do. - - -	2	
At the monthly meeting to which ſhe belonged.	women's do. - - -	2	20
	men's do. - - -	2	
	women's do. a 2nd time	2	60
	men's do. do.	2	
By the parties themſelves - - - - - -		18	
One of the four friends appointed in *each* monthly meeting, (viz. two men and two women) for making the requiſite enquiries, were to give public notice of the intended marriage at the cloſe of a firſt day meeting for worſhip, to which the parties reſpectively belonged - - - - - - -		2	
In all - - - - - - - - - - -		20	220

After

cannot wonder that a reviſion of them ſhould be deemed neceſſary. The ſubject was taken into conſideration by the national yearly meeting, during its ſittings in the preſent year of our "NARRATIVE;" and regulations, nearly ſimilar to thoſe which now exiſt in Great Britain, were then preſcribed for the uſe of the ſociety in Ireland.

NINTH MONTH.

JAMES NICHOLSON of Belfaſt, who had been for ſome years in the ſtation of a MINISTER, declined the attendance of meetings for worſhip; and declared, firſt at a meeting in Liſburn, and afterwards at a public meeting of the quarterly meeting in Lurgan, that he ſhould no longer conſider himſelf as a member of the ſociety. Not long afterwards, the monthly meeting of Liſburn, recorded a minute upon his caſe, diſuniting him from the ſociety on account of his aforeſaid public declarations.

TENTH

After which, the parties were enjoined, openly and ſolemnly to pronounce their marriage covenant, in a meeting for worſhip, which is always held on ſuch occaſions.

The marriage might be accompliſhed at the place where the laſt monthly meeting was held, and therefore the diſtance thence to the woman's reſidence is not computed. The diſtance home is not computed, becauſe the parties had to travel that journey *after* their marriage. And there is no computation of the diſtance which the *woman* had to travel to, and from, the monthly meeting of which ſhe was a member.

TENTH MONTH.

JOHN HANCOCK of Liſburn, diſcontinued the attendance of meetings for worſhip; and in a letter, dated 7th month, 16th, 1801,* he informed the monthly meeting "that after having faithfully warned them, "and teſtified againſt their wrong pratices, as long as "he felt the requirings of duty authoriſing him in "this painful labour, he believed his duty lay in ſe-"parating himſelf from them." In the ſucceeding month a teſtimony of diſownment againſt him was publiſhed by the monthly meeting of Liſburn, a copy of which is as follows, viz:

"After a long and dark night of apoſtacy, in "which the true church retired into the wilderneſs, "it was pleaſing to Almighty God, in thoſe latter "days, to ſound forth the everlaſting goſpel of his "beloved ſon, Chriſt Jeſus, in thoſe lands, making "uſe of an inſtrument well fitted and qualified for "that great and important purpoſe. Many, in that "day, received thoſe glad tidings with joy, and feel-"ing in themſelves the living evidence of that light "and truth, which he was commiſſioned to preach, "joined in with it, and being baptiſed with the one "baptiſm, were thereby made one in ſpirit, one in "faith, and in the Lord's time, and under his Almighty

 "power,

* This letter is printed in the "Additional Obſerva-"tions, being a Sequel to the Reaſons for withdrawing, "&c. &c. by JOHN HANCOCK, page 17, Ir. ed. 2d.

" power, became one body, even a viſible church, to " the praiſe of his great name.

" The ſame divine wiſdom that firſt gathered this " people, ſaw meet to make uſe of the ſame inſtru- " ment to eſtabliſh a church diſcipline among them, " to be as a rule in government under the influence " of their holy head, Chriſt Jeſus. This has been " with little variation obſerved by this people to this " day, as an outward rule of conduct, to inform the " unwary, and thoſe who may be inclined to take " liberties inconſiſtent with that high and holy pro- " feſſion of religion we are making. This was our " beginning, and thus were we united.

" JOHN HANCOCK, of Liſburn meeting, had his " education among us, the people called Quakers, and " was an acknowledged MINISTER among us. His " conduct was orderly, a ſteady attender of meetings " for worſhip and diſcipline, and a zealous ſupporter " of the good order eſtabliſhed among us; and, " though he ran well for a time, *through unwatchful-* " *neſs*, he has latterly forſaken the attendance of " thoſe meetings which he had contributed to ſup- " port, and his example, influencing his children " which are at home, they alſo have refrained from " our meetings as well as many others in divers " places. To hold meetings with other ſocieties " without the conſent and approbation of the monthly " meeting, to which the party belongs, is adviſed " againſt, and is contrary to our diſcipline: this he " has frequently practiſed, though tenderly adviſed " againſt

" againſt it. He alſo gave encouragement by his " preſence, together with ſome of his children, and " ſervant, to *a proceeding by way of marriage*, be- " tween two of our members, in direct oppoſition to " our well known rules on that head, and to the care " which friends had exerciſed on that occaſion. And " of late, he has publiſhed in print, a pamphlet enti- " tled, ' Reaſons for withdrawing from ſociety with " the people called Quakers,' containing animadver- " ſions on the ſcriptures, and ſome doctrines therein, " which we as a ſociety have not unity with. Now, " in order to bear our teſtimony againſt this *diſorderly* " *conduct*, (and as much as we can to ſhut the door " againſt *this deluſive falſe liberty*, that has crept in " among us) do publiſh this our teſtimony againſt the " ſaid John Hancock; nor can we hold unity with " him, as a member, or miniſter, till his eyes are " again mercifully anointed, that he may ſee the " *deluſion he has fallen into*, and be enabled to *condemn* " that conduct, which we, as a ſociety, have not " unity with."

In addition to the " Reaſons for withdrawing from " ſociety with the people called Quakers," (referred to in the preceding document) John Hancock afterwards publiſhed a " SEQUEL," containing further obſervations on the ſame ſubject; alſo two other pamphlets, viz.—" A Friendly Expoſtulation addreſſed to " the People called Quakers." And " Serious Con- " ſiderations on Revelation, the Scriptures, Religion, " Morality,

"Morality, and Superſtition."* Theſe pamphlets are now before the public, (the whole of them having been printed in Ireland, and in London, and the two former in America;) and they who are deſirous of competent information reſpecting the grounds of his ſeparation, and the opinions entertained by him, with reſpect both to the ſociety and religious ſubjects generally, will perhaps deem it neceſſary to peruſe his pamphlets with candour.

In the teſtimony of his diſownment by the ſociety it is ſtated, that "though he ran well for a time; "*through unwatchfulneſs*, he has latterly *forſaken the at-* "*tendance of thoſe meetings*, which he had contributed "to ſupport. He is alſo charged with *diſorderly* con- "duct," and it is aſſerted that he had "fallen "into a deluſion." This ſtatement might convey the idea that he had become lukewarm, or even negligent in the diſcharge of religious duties; whereas the fact was, that the ſame ſerioufneſs and circumſpection of conduct, for which he had long been conſpicuous, continued undiminiſhed.

Candour, therefore, ſhould have induced the ſociety, whilſt recording his caſe in their journals for the information

* JOHN HANCOCK, has alſo lately publiſhed another pamphlet, entitled, "Thoughts on the abuſe of figurative "Language, as applied to religious ſubjects, with ſome "Obſervations, addreſſed to the people called Quakers."— This pamphlet has yet been printed only in Ireland.

formation of *poſterity*, to have taken ſome notice of the reaſons alledged by himſelf for forſaking the attendance of their meetings, viz. " becauſe he believed his duty " lay in ſeparating himſelf from them."

His opinions on religious ſubjects are doubtleſs conſiderably at variance with thoſe entertained by our ſociety; and ſome of theſe opinions are ſuch as would not perhaps be admitted into the creed of any denomination of profeſſing chriſtians in the preſent day. Hence the continuance of his connexion with the ſociety, as one of its members, could be productive of no advantage to either of the parties, and had evidently ceaſed to be the wiſh of both. In the Appendix (No. 4.) ſome extracts are inſerted from his writings, for the purpoſe of exhibiting a brief ſtatement of his opinions on ſome important points, and a ſpecimen of the temper with which his pamphlets are written.

TWELFTH MONTH.

At the SELECT QUARTERLY meeting for the province of ULSTER, held in this month, the caſe of a miniſter, reſiding within that province, came under conſideration; and the members of the ſelect quarterly meeting generally concurred in their diſunity with him. It was therefore concluded to report this diſunity to the monthly meeting for diſcipline to which he belonged, with the further information, that frequent brotherly admonition had been imparted to the individual, and that there had afterwards been a patient

patient waiting, in order that the admonition might produce the desired effect. This report was accordingly made to the monthly meeting, which was thus called upon to exercise its own judgment upon the case. The result was, that it did not think fit to concur with the select quarterly meeting, in disapprobation of the minister, and its conclusion to this effect was accordingly expressed. Upon this, the select quarterly meeting deemed it expedient to report its disunity with the said minister to a subsequent quarterly meeting for discipline; and the latter concurred with the monthly meeting, in not admitting that satisfactory grounds for disunity with the said minister had been stated. The elders of the select quarterly meeting, finding that their conduct, in the oversight of the ministry, was disapproved both on the present occasion, and in the case of a minister from America who had lately been in that district, they requested to be released from attending the select meetings, and to resign their offices. This request was complied with. The quarterly meeting, continued its sanction of the minister in that district, with whom the elders had expressed dissatisfaction, and the *select meetings throughout the whole province of* ULSTER *were thenceforwards discontinued.*'

Soon afterwards THOMAS BOARDMAN, of Dungannon, THOMAS PHELPS, of Moyallen, JAMES CHRISTY, of Stramore, JOHN DAVIS, and HANNAH DAVIS, of Lurgan, who were all in the station of ELDERS, and members of Ulster quarterly meeting, declined the attendance of meetings for discipline, becaufe

becauſe they could not unite in the meaſures attempted to be carried into effect in thoſe meetings, nor with the perſons who were *now* become moſt active in them.

ANNA CLIBBORN, of Waringſtown, near Lurgan, reſigned the office of clerk to the women's monthly meeting of Lurgan, and about nine months afterwards ſhe ſent in the following reſignation of membership.

To the men's and women's monthly meeting of Lurgan.

"Though I have, for ſome time paſt, believed it my duty to decline the attendance of meetings, and been fully perſuaded in my own mind, that many of the forms and rules eſtabliſhed by your ſociety, are not of *God* but of *Man*; a deſire to act with caution, and to avoid taking any ſtep, without being fully convinced of the rectitude thereof, has cauſed me to forbear till now, informing you that I no longer conſider myſelf a member of your ſociety. I have endeavoured ſolidly to weigh my motives for withdrawing therefrom, and can in truth ſay, I have not been actuated by a deſire of appearing conſpicuous, nor have I dared to follow any man, but acted in obedience to apprehended duty."

I remain your friend,

ANNA CLIBBORN."

Waringſtown,
9th Month, 1801.

The aforeſaid Anna Clibborn finiſhed her earthly

ly pilgrimage, in the ſpring of 1802, being taken off in a decline. During a long continued illneſs, her mind was preſerved under the influence of calmneſs, reſignation, and hope, and ſhe looked back on the ſteps ſhe had taken, with ſatisfaction and peace.

JAMES HAGAN of Belfaſt, was ſo much diſſatiſfied with the proceedings of the ſociety, that he had for ſome weeks declined the attendance of meetings for worſhip, and in the monthly meeting of Liſburn, he declared as his belief, that their ſyſtem was degenerated into lifeleſs formality, and that he ſhould no longer conſider himſelf a member of the ſociety. A minute was *thereupon made, in that ſame meeting,* to record his diſmemberſhip.

ROBERT HAGAN, (brother to James Hagan,) removed to *Wilmington, in the ſtate of Delaware,* North America; and it is ſtated that he alſo has been diſowned for not ſtanding up, and taking off his hat, when NICHOLAS WALN kneeled in prayer at a meeting there.

ISAAC HAYDOCK, of Charlemont, a MINISTER, reſigned his memberſhip, by publicly ſtating in a meeting for worſhip, that he could not feel unity with the ſociety, on account of the wrong conduct of many of its members.

About two years afterwards, he was viſited with ſickneſs, which continued many months; and on the firſt of the third month, 1803, he departed this life. He

He was diſtinguiſhed by all who knew him, for great innocence and meekneſs; and on the day before his death, he addreſſed his ſiſter in the following terms. "I am now lying here without pain or ſickneſs; and "I have often wondered why I have been permitted "to tarry here ſo long; but I believe I have not been "faithful enough. I might have done more, and let "this be a warning to thee, as well as to others! "It is not with reſpect to the leaving off the attend- "ance of meetings: this I have done, and it was "the greateſt croſs I ever met with; the example of "no man would have induced me to do ſo; and I "think, I have felt the love of the Almighty flow "towards me, in a greater degree, for this act, than "ever I experienced in my life, except when I firſt "became acquainted with it."

TWELFTH MONTH.

JOHN ROGERS, jun. and ELIZABETH DOYLE, both members of the monthly meeting of Liſburn, intending to take each other in marriage, but "feeling "their minds reſtrained from conforming" to the uſual practice of the ſociety, they addreſſed the following letter to the QUARTERLY MEETING OF ULSTER:

To the quarterly meeting to be held at Lurgan, 12th month 8th, 1800.

"Upon mature conſideration, we believed it beſt, "to lay the following before you, in preference to "the monthly meeting, in the bounds of which we "reſide

" reſide; believing it to be in a very unfit ſtate to ſit " in judgment; moreover, apprehending that the man- " ner in which we are led, would be greatly miſre- " preſented, concluded it ſafeſt, that the province (*of* " *Ulſter*) in its collective capacity, ſhould have the " matter immediately from ourſelves; and we hereby " inform you, that we have intentions of taking each " other in marriage, but have to acquaint you, that " we *feel our minds reſtrained from conforming to* the " uſual mode previous to, and in the accompliſhing " of, marriages, believing there are many forms at- " tached thereto, which are by no means neceſſary; " and we conſider every thing, not neceſſary, ſuperflu- " ous; and ſhould have no place in minds ſincerely " diſpoſed to walk in the ſimplicity, which truth " leads thoſe into, who fully and unreſervedly adhere " to its convictions, free from imbibed prejudices to " eſtabliſhed cuſtoms, in this or other reſpects; cuſ- " toms, with which we cannot unite, nor ſupport by " our example, without *doing violence to our own feel-* " *ings*, which we conceive to be of more conſequence, " than that of falling under the cenſure of men, or " bodies of men, for non-compliance with theſe cuſ- " toms, for which we can ſee no real neceſſity; ſuch " as the perſonal appearance of the parties declaring " their intentions, and going through a round of for- " mal ceremonies; the repairing to meeting-houſes, " in order to accompliſh them, which we conſider a " ſuperſtitious practice; a practice to which much " unneceſſary preparation and attendance are attached; " a practice with which we cannot unite, nor ſup- " port by our example, believing they might as well

" be

" be accompliſhed in a more ſimple manner, before a " competent number of witneſſes. Therefore, under " theſe conſiderations, and *from apprehenſions of duty*, " and *from no other motive whatever*, we *dare not* " but diſſent from the eſtabliſhed mode, and are re- " ſtrained from going through the round of formal " compliances to the rules of the ſociety, however " ſingular it may appear, and how much ſoever we " may be cenſured for our ſentiments; believing we " have not been led into them through a curious en- " quiry after new things, nor from any deſire of our " own to introduce novelties, neither from any previous " concert or converſation with any individual or indi- " duals whatever, but by attending to the gradual un- " foldings *thereof* in our own minds, without either " of us knowing, how the mind of the other was " circumſtanced; finding on mentioning it to each " other, that the feelings of the one correſponded " with thoſe of the other; ſo that it is no light matter " to us, nor the effect of raſh judgment, but that of " calm and deliberate conſideration. We believe it " *neceſſary*, undeniably ſo, that *due enquiry and publi-* " *cation* be made in all ſuch caſes, *in order to prevent* " *any thing clandeſtinely taking place*; therefore we mat- " ter not how ſtrict a ſcrutiny be made into our con- " duct, and we expect our intentions will be publiſh- " ed; but are reſtrained from having them publiſhed " among any particular ſociety, but in ſuch a manner " as to have it general, allowing ſufficient time for any " to make their objections, between their being firſt " publiſhed and the accompliſhing of them, which we " expect will not be in a meeting-houſe, but according

" to

"to the moſt ſimple mode, as being moſt conſiſtent "with the importance of the ſubject; apprehending "it beſt for us to do whatever may appear right, "without looking to conſequences, at the ſame time "wiſhing to give every conſideration its due weight; "and however ſevere and exerciſing the trial to us "may be, thus to diſſent in ſo particular a manner "from eſtabliſhed modes, we are at times enabled to "rejoice under the ſuſtaining evidence, that we *are in* "*the line of our duty*, in thus bearing our teſtimony "againſt the uſeleſs forms of a ſociety grievouſly en- "tangled in a wilderneſs of cuſtoms and opinions re- "ceived by tradition, and adopted without examining "the nature, tendency, or neceſſity thereof. It is "with a degree of awfulneſs we have to communicate "theſe things to you, and are your real friends.

"JOHN ROGERS, Jun.
"ELIZABETH DOYLE."

School-hill, near Liſburn,
12*th month* 7*th*, 1800.

No anſwer was returned to this letter from the quarterly meeting, but the monthly meeting of Liſburn proceeded to viſit the parties in conſequence of their intended offence againſt the rules of the diſcipline; and this not effecting any change in the intention of the parties, their marriage was accompliſhed the fourth of the third month, 1801, at the School-houſe, where Elizabeth Doyle reſided as a teacher; and from which office ſhe was *removed*, on *account of the manner of her marriage.*

The

The following is a copy of the certificate ſigned on that occaſion.

" JOHN ROGERS, of Liſburn, in the county of " Antrim, ſon of WM. ROGERS, late of the ſame, " deceaſed, and ABIGAIL his wife; and ELIZABETH " DOYLE, of School-hill, or Proſpect-hill, near the " ſame, daughter of JOHN DOYLE, late of Ballina- " mona, in the county of Wexford, and MARY his " wife, both deceaſed; having intentions of taking " each other in marriage, the ſame were publiſhed " by public *advertiſement* in the town of Liſburn afore- " ſaid, *one month previous to this date*, and nothing " appeared to obſtruct the accompliſhing of their " ſaid intentions.

" Now we, the ſaid John Rogers, and Elizabeth " Doyle, this fourth day of the third month, in the " year one thouſand eight hundred and one, in the " preſence of the under-named perſons, collected to- " gether for that purpoſe, at the houſe at School- " hill, or Proſpect-hill, aforeſaid, take each other for " huſband and wife, promiſing to continue faithful " to each other in thoſe relations, until death ſeparate " us.

" And in confirmation of our entering into ſaid " ſolemn covenant, do in the preſence of the ſaid un- " dernamed perſons, ſet our hands to theſe preſents as " huſband and wife, the day and year above written.

" JOHN ROGERS,

" ELIZABETH ROGERS."

And

"And we the said undernamed persons hereby "certify, that in our presence, the above engagement "was entered into, and, as witnesses thereunto, sub-"scribe our names:

"SAMUEL STEPHENS,	"JOs. WILLIAMS, jun.
"MOSES CHAMBERS,	"MARGARET PIKE,
"JOHN HANCOCK, jun.	"MARY CHRISTY,
"MOSES MATCHETT,	"WM. JAMES HOGG,
"THOMAS M'ALESTER,	"RUTH JOHNSON,
"JAMES HUNTER,	"MARY DAWSON,
"JOHN HANCOCK,	"MARTHA BAILEY,
"RUTH WILLIAMSON,	"J. COURTENAY, jun."

In consequence of their adopting this mode of marriage, the monthly meeting of Lisburn proceeded to disown the parties, and issued the following testimony.

"Whereas John Rogers, junior, and Elizabeth "Doyle, made profession with us the people called "Quakers; but having *(as they alledge, through mo-"tives of conscience)* so far deviated from the good order "and known rules established amongst us as a society, "as to join together by way of marriage, in a man-"ner differing therefrom, whereby an opening might "be made for *much disorder, improper*, and *clandestine "connexions*, notwithstanding a considerable degree of "labour had been administered in endeavouring to "dissuade them from it. Now, in order to clear the "society from such proceedings, as we apprehend *not "warranted by* TRUTH, we hereby disown the said "John Rogers and Elizabeth Doyle from membership "with us the said people."

Previously

Previouſly to the aforeſaid marriage, a letter, dated twelfth month, 1800, was written by John Rogers, jun. to one of the friends, appointed by the monthly meeting to viſit him on that occaſion. This letter contains ſome valuable and important truths, delivered in a very ſerious and impreſſive manner; it alſo contains ſome exceedingly ſtrong charges againſt the ſociety for hypocriſy, degeneracy, and the idolatry of forms, "walking agreeably to the letter of an outward law, "whilſt their hearts are going after their covetouſneſs." The letter is publiſhed by John Hancock, at the concluſion of his pamphlet, entitled, "A Friendly Expoſ-"tulation," and is referred to in this place, chiefly, as ſtating, in connexion with that pamphlet, the opinions that appear to be held by ſeveral of the ſeparatiſts in Ireland, not only reſpecting the mode of marriage which ſome have lately adopted there, but alſo reſpecting the ſtate of the ſociety, and thoſe religious ſubjects, concerning which the views of the ſociety, and of the ſeparatiſts, now chiefly differ.

THIRD MONTH.

James Hunter, of Ballynacree, has withdrawn from the Society, as alſo has John Greeves, of county Tyrone. They each, in the *quarterly meeting* at Liſburn, *publicly* aſſigned the *degeneracy of the ſociety*, as their reaſon for leaving it.

The national yearly meeting of Ireland, was held, as uſual, in the fourth month, 1801, and the information communicated to it, was extremely painful and

diſcouraging. The ſeceſſion of ſome from memberſhip, and of others from activity in the diſcipline, had produced ſerious effects. From the anſwers to the queries, and the ſtatement of the repreſentatives, it appeared, that in one province (Ulſter) "ALL the friends in the ſtation of ELDERS had been releaſed from that office by the quarterly meeting;"—that "one monthly meeting of MINISTERS and ELDERS in the province of Leinſter, had been diſſolved at *their own requeſt*; and *all the elders* of that meeting diſcharged from their office;"—that "in divers parts of the nation, there were ſome who declined the attendance of our religious meetings, upon the *grounds of diſunity* with *them*, and the *manner in which they were held*;—that ſome were ſtill in a diſpoſition to *undervalue the ſcriptures of truth*;—and that others had fallen into the practice of *keeping their ſeats*, and *keeping on their hats*, whilſt acknowledged miniſters were engaged in *public ſupplication*." The marriage of John Rogers and Elizabeth Doyle, and the circumſtance of "ſundry members of our ſociety, having been preſent on that occaſion," were alſo mentioned as a "painful inſtance of diſorderly proceeding."

The circumſtances under which the members of the ſociety aſſembled, at the preſent national yearly meeting, were certainly extraordinary, and probably unprecedented in the annals of its hiſtory. The exigencies of the times called for the active exertion of the united wiſdom and virtue of the body. By its deliberations were now to be decided the important queſtions—whether the progreſs of time, or any change in

in habits, opinions or circumſtances, required a reviſion of the antient rules of diſcipline? (ſee Appendix, No. 5), or whether they ſhould continue to be ſtrictly maintained and enforced in caſes which, it may reaſonably be preſumed, *had not* been contemplated at the time thoſe rules were framed?—And, as it would be impoſſible to do this, unleſs they, to whom the execution of the rules muſt of neceſſity be committed, were themſelves men of exemplary lives and converſation, fearing God and hating covetouſneſs—whether there was not cauſe to fear that a *competent number* of *ſuch* members would not be found in ſome of thoſe places, where the execution of the rules might be deemed neceſſary; in which caſe it muſt be obvious, that no endeavours to convince of imputed heterodoxy, or to reclaim from its effects, could be expected to produce beneficial conſequences.*

And finally, whether there were not conſiderable

* From the information communicated to the national yearly meeting, it appeared, that the anſwers to the quarterly meeting queries, from one of the provinces, were compoſed of the anſwers of *only two* of the monthly meetings; that in one monthly meeting *no* diſcipline was tranſacted on *two* of *the usual days* for holding the ſaid meeting: other deficiencies were ſtated from another province; and the report of the committee appointed by the ſaid national yearly meeting, aſſerts, "that the ſtate of our ſociety there (Ulſter) is at *a* "*low ebb*, and our chriſtian diſcipline but *weakly maintain*-"*ed*, the minds of many being *enfeebled* from various cauſes "in the right ſupport of it." See this report, page 139, 140.

reaſon to apprehend, that the rules of the diſcipline had made ſome progreſs in producing thoſe conſequences, which, in every age of the world, it has been found ſo exceedingly difficult to ſeparate from the obſervance of all outward and ceremonial modes and obſervances, even the ſimpleſt forms of devotion not excepted; whether theſe rules, inſtead of being regarded as MEANS for the attainment of an END, were not themſelves truſted to, and reſted in, as the ULTIMATE OBJECT, by too many of thoſe perſons who were employed in executing them; and whether there were not ſymptoms of the actual exiſtence of that alarming evil, which the moſt approved and enlightened members of our ſociety have always conſidered it as being peculiarly in danger of, from the *fairneſs of its outſide ſhew*, and the *comelineſs of its external forms*. In proportion as theſe are *fair and comely*, there is the *greater danger* of their being regarded as the *eſſentials* of religion, and of their inducing worldly minded men to deceive themſelves, and to invade the peace of others, by the exerciſe of a rigid and coercive zeal for modes, and forms, and opinions, whilſt they themſelves are little acquainted with, and leſs influenced by, the genuine temper, and ſpirit of pure religion.

With reſpect to the marriage which had been alluded to, as having been contracted, "contrary to "the good order eſtabliſhed in the ſociety," it was evidently a caſe which preſented conſiderable difficulty. The almoſt general practice, and the concurrent advices of the ſociety for upwards of a century, had ſtamped this an offence which ſhould ſubject to cenſure

cenſure and diſownment, not only the parties who ſo married, but alſo "parents and guardians that may "be conſenting to, or encouraging ſuch marriages:" and, whilſt ſuch a rule exiſted, no choice could remain, but either to *reconſider* the propriety of *continuing the rule*, or timely and impartially to put it in practice. The latter alternative involved a further difficulty; for it was poſſible at leaſt that the aforeſaid marriage might be ſucceeded by others of the ſame kind, and that the parties, thus marrying, might continue to prefer, as witneſſes to their marriage contract and proceedings, perſons who were looked up to as reſpectable members of the ſociety.* Now the latter, by thus giving their ſanction to a "*diſor-*"*derly marriage*," muſt be deemed accomplices in the offence; and, by the laws of the ſociety, they alſo would become ſubject to cenſure and diſownment. And as a *very ſmall number* of *witneſſes* could hardly be thought ſufficient, on an occaſion of ſuch unqueſtionable importance and ſolemnity, it muſt follow, that the practice of diſowning EVERY member, preſent on ſuch occaſions, might involve very ſerious conſequences both to them, and to the ſociety itſelf.

There was another conſideration of much importance. The lately adopted mode of marriage had been practiſed

* And, by thoſe who entertain any doubts of the *legality* of ſuch marriages, it will be admitted, as a reaſon *of additional* importance, that the accompliſhment of them ſhould be atteſted, not only by a *competent number of witnesses*, but that their *characters* ſhould be of *acknowledged respectability*.

tiſed by perſons of exemplary conduct, who ſolemnly profeſſed, that "*upon mature conſideration, and from* "*apprehenſions of duty, and from no other motive what-*"*ever, they dared not but diſſent from the eſtabliſhed* "*mode of the ſociety.*"* By this declaration we are called upon to conſider them as placed in the *very ſame ſituation* as the ſociety itſelf, on *its firſt eſtabliſhment*: and as it had then aſſerted and exerciſed the right of private judgment on this very point, it would ſurely require much ſerious deliberation, before its deſcendants ſhould reſolve to *cenſure* and *diſown* their brethren, for *doing the ſame thing*.†

Conſidered

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* See the preceding letter from John Rogers and Elizabeth Doyle, page 123; and for a further account of the feelings and ſcruples which appear to have occaſioned diſſatisfaction with the forms in relation to marriage, practiſed by the ſociety, the reader is referred to "A Friendly Expoſtu-"lation, by John Hancock," page 17, &c.

† The following ſtatement of the opinions and practice of the ſociety, ſoon after its eſtabliſhment, was given by William Penn, in 1694:

"Their way of marriage is peculiar to them; and ſhews "a diſtinguiſhing care, above other ſocieties, profeſſing "chriſtianity. They ſay that *marriage is an ordinance of* "*God, and that God only can rightly join man and woman* "*in marriage.* Therefore they uſe neither *prieſt* nor *ma-*"*giſtrate*; but the man and woman concerned, take each "other, as huſband and wife, in the preſence of *divers* "*credible*

Conſidered as an offence againſt the rules of the ſociety, or againſt its authority as a chriſtian church, the

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" *credible witneſſes, promiſing to each other, with God's* " *aſſiſtance, to be loving and faithful, in that relation,* " *till death ſhall ſeparate them.* But antecedent to this, " they firſt preſent themſelves to the monthly meeting for " the affairs of the church where they reſide; there declar- " ing their intentions to take one another as huſband and " wife, if the ſaid meeting have nothing material to object " againſt it." PENN. vol. i. *p.* 869. He then proceeds to deſcribe other particulars of the proceſs, which we omit to notice here, for the ſake of brevity, and becauſe this proceſs has been conſiderably altered ſince that time. *See page* 113.

The act for preventing clandeſtine marriages, which was paſſed by the Britiſh Parliament, in 1753, does not extend to Ireland; and as no ſimilar act has been paſſed by its Legiſlature, it is conceived that the common law of Ireland reſpecting marriages, is now the ſame as it was in England, before the paſſing of the marriage act, excepting ſo far as the common law of Ireland has been altered by particular ſtatutes, affecting Roman Catholics, and Proteſtant Diſſenters in that kingdom. Hence the mode of marriage which the ſeparatiſts in Ireland have adopted, is held by many to conſtitute an engagement, *equally valid in law*, ſo far as it reſpects the contracting parties, with the marriages of Quakers or any other ſociety. On this ſubject, however, a contrary opinion is maintained by ſome.

During the time of Cromwell's adminiſtration, marriages were ſolemnized before the civil magiſtrate, and in this way

the diſſent of the MODERN SEPARATISTS, in relation to marriage, was from the practice of *one of the ſmalleſt ſocieties* of profeſſing chriſtians in Europe; whereas the diſſent of the PRIMITIVE QUAKERS was in direct oppoſition to the practice, and the opinions, *of the whole country* in which they lived. Now as they had, on various occaſions, experienced, firſt the PERSECUTION — then the LENITY — and laſtly

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way ſixty-ſix couple were joined together at Knareſborough, in Yorkſhire, during the ſhort ſpace of four years. The bans were publiſhed on three ſeparate days before the marriage, ſometimes at the market-croſs, and ſometimes in the church. The following is a copy of one of the certificates:

"March 30, 1651. MARMADUKE INMAN, and PRU-
"DENCE LOWCOCK, both of the pariſh of Knareſborough,
"were this day married together at Ripon, having firſt been
"publiſhed three ſeveral market-days, in the market-place
"of Knareſborough, according to the act of parliament, and
"no exceptions made. In the preſence of THOMAS DAVIES
"and ANTHONY SIMPSON." *History of Knaresborough, by* E. HARGROVE, *page* 61.

By the common law of Scotland, at the preſent day, it is the *conſent of the parties* which conſtitutes a marriage, and this *without any religious ceremony.*

In the year 1663, an ineffectual attempt was made to invalidate the marriage of two members of our ſociety, and the cauſe was tried before JUDGE ARCHER, at Nottingham; of which an intereſting, though very brief account is given in SEWELL's Hiſtory of the Quakers, *page* 283, *of the* 2nd *edit. printed* 1725.

laſtly the SANCTION of government, whilſt acting in obedience to what they believed to be *their* duty, it became very important for their deſcendants to conſider, how far the proceeding to the utmoſt limits of their power, on this occaſion, would indicate that the LENITY, and ultimately the SANCTION which their anceſtors had prayed for, and obtained from the government of *that day*, were, by the ſociety in the *preſent day*, deemed improper to be granted to its equally ſcrupulous and conſcientious members; and, how far the proceeding to cenſure and diſown the latter, under circumſtances of peculiar ſimilarity, would now deſerve to be regarded as an imitation of that part only of the conduct of government, which conſiſted in the PERSECUTION of their anceſtors. See Appendix, No. 6.

But the point of view in which this ſubject appears moſt of all important, is that which is connected with, what is deemed, the diſcriminating and fundamental tenet of the ſociety. The great end and object of their doctrine, their diſcipline, their miniſtry, their ſilent worſhip—nay, the very ground of their original ſeparation from other ſocieties, and of their exiſtence as a diſtinct ſect, are, profeſſedly, all for the purpoſe of more effectually directing the attention of the mind to the inward, individual teachings of DIVINE GRACE, as the *alone*, *all-ſufficient*, *infallible*, and *univerſal* guide in all that reſpects faith and practice. Compared with this, the *ſcriptures* themſelves, are deemed a *ſecondary* and *ſubordinate* rule; and the decrees of popes or councils, the authority of churches,

churches, or prieſts, and the laws even of civil governments, are held to be of NO obligation, if oppoſed to the requirings of this inward guide. It muſt then evidently conſtitute a moſt intereſting conſideration—whether, for a diverſity of opinion and conduct, about *forms relating to marriage,* the ſociety could with conſiſtency, proceed deliberately to diſown and cenſure, not only individual members, but collective families, of unimpeachable moral conduct; whilſt, with indications of unqueſtionable ſincerity and uprightneſs, they not only retain and declare a ſtedfaſt belief in this diſcriminating and fundamental principle, but moreover, profeſs, that, in obedience to the dictates of this very principle, they have been led into that conduct, for which the ſociety deems it neceſſary to exclude them from religious communion.

With theſe, among other ſubjects for its deliberation, the national yearly meeting was held in Dublin; and it might have been intereſting, if the particulars of what paſſed in that meeting, could be given in this narrative. It is probable however, that no memorial of theſe is preſerved, except what the journals of the ſociety furniſh; and the following minutes are therefore ſubmitted to the ſerious and attentive peruſal of the reader.

NATIONAL YEARLY MEETING, 1801.

"Written anſwers to the queries of this meeting "have been brought in, from the three provinces, "and read at this time; from which, and verbal re-"ports from the repreſentatives, it appears, that the "anſwers

" anſwers from ULSTER quarterly meeting, are com-
" poſed of thoſe of *only two* of the monthly meetings,
" the *others not having returned* any anſwers to the
" quarterly meeting. Account was alſo received, that
" in one monthly meeting in that province, friends
" did not tranſact any affairs of the diſcipline, *on two*
" *of the uſual days* for holding ſaid meeting. This
" meeting has alſo been informed, that in that pro-
" vince, ALL *the friends, in the ſtation of elders, have*
" *been releaſed from that office, by the quarterly meeting*;
" ſo that, of courſe, the quarterly and monthly meet-
" ings of miniſters and elders have been diſcontinued
" there: and alſo that a friend, in the ſtation of a mi-
" niſter, has proceeded to travel in that line, and ap-
" point meetings, without a certificate from the
" monthly meeting to which he belongs. From the re-
" port of a repreſentative of LEINSTER province, it ap-
" pears, that *one monthly meeting* of *miniſters* and *elders*,
" has, at *their own requeſt*, been *diſſolved*; and ALL
" *the elders of ſaid meeting diſcharged from their office*;
" and that, from another *ſelect* meeting, there has
" been *no anſwers* returned to the queries, at the two
" laſt quarterly meetings.

" The foregoing accounts being cauſe of painful
" exerciſe and concern to this meeting, and feeling
" deſirous of endeavouring in the ability afforded, for
" the *reſtoration of harmony*, and *good order* amongſt us
" as a religious ſociety, that ſo all may be preſerved
" in the *unity of the ſpirit*, which is the *bond of true*
" *peace*; a committee was appointed to take the fore-
" going communications into their weighty and deli-
" berate

" berate conſideration, who brought in the following " report, in writing, which, being twice read, was " agreed to."

" *To the yearly meeting.*

" We your committee, appointed to take into " conſideration the ſtate of our religious ſociety, " in this nation, met, joined by a committee of the " women's yearly meeting; and being, we truſt, fa- " voured to have our minds centered in a good degree " of *ſolemn quiet*, the ſtate of ULSTER province came " feelingly before us, both as repreſented by the an- " ſwers to the queries from that quarter, and from " verbal accounts given to the yearly meeting. We " are of the judgment, that the ſtate of *our ſociety* " *there is at a low ebb*, and our chriſtian *diſcipline but* " *weakly maintained*; the minds of many being enfee- " bled, from different cauſes, in the right ſupport of " it; for whoſe help, and the reſtoration of others, we " have felt earneſt engagement of mind; and are deſi- " rous, that the yearly meeting may ſee the neceſſity " of making a ſuitable appointment of friends, to " viſit the quarterly and monthly meetings of that " province, leaving them at liberty to viſit particular " meetings, families, or individuals, as they may feel " their minds drawn in love; and, as they may feel " engaged, to extend their viſit to other parts of the " nation.

" And as it appears, that, in divers parts of the " nation, there are ſome who decline the attendance

" of

" of our religious meetings, upon the grounds of dif-
" unity with them, and the manner in which they
" are held; that ſome are ſtill in a diſpoſition to un-
" dervalue the ſcriptures of truth; and others have
" fallen into the practice of keeping their ſeats, and
" keeping on their hats, when acknowledged miniſ-
" ters are engaged in public ſupplication.

" In theſe particulars, and in other reſpects, we are
" ſorrowfully affected to find the prevalence of a ſpirit,
" which appears to ſoar above that path of humility
" and rectitude, into which we are fully perſuaded
" truth led our worthy predeceſſors, and ſtill leads its
" faithful followers in this day. We therefore feel
" deſirous, that friends of the three provinces, who
" have the cauſe of truth at heart, may be encou-
" raged, on the firſt appearance of deviation in any,
" from the principles and practice of friends, to ex-
" poſtulate with them in brotherly love; and, if ſuch
" continue therein, that the monthly and quarterly
" meetings labour, in the ſpirit of meekneſs, in order
" to reclaim and reſtore them.

" We are alſo informed of a painful inſtance hav-
" ing occurred in ULSTER province, of two of their
" members having proceeded, in a manner *contrary to*
" *the comely order* eſtabliſhed among us, to *take each*
" *other as huſband and wife*; and that ſundry members
" of our ſociety were preſent on that occaſion. We
" propoſe to the yearly meeting, that the monthly
" meeting, wherein ſuch *diſorderly* proceeding has
" taken place, may be recommended to be careful,
" that

" that our chriſtian diſcipline be properly ſupported,
" in *the right line and ſpirit.*

" Signed on behalf of the committee,

" ISAAC JACOB."

" And, agreeably to the recommendation contained
" in ſaid report, this meeting appoints the following
" friends, in conjunction with ſuch women friends as
" their meeting ſhall nominate, to pay a viſit to the
" quarterly and monthly meetings in Ulſter province;
" with liberty to viſit particular meetings, families,
" or individuals, as they may find their minds drawn
" in love; and alſo, as they may feel ſo engaged, to
" extend their viſit to other parts of the nation, viz.:

" JAMES ABEL, " JOHN MORRIS,
" ISAAC JACOB, AND
" THOMAS HARVEY, " JONAS STOTT."

The national yearly meeting having been thus minutely informed of the various caſes of imputed delinquency, adverted to in the preceding minutes, it would naturally be aware, that its advices, on this occaſion, would be applied, not only to caſes then exiſting, but to others which were likely to occur: that the attention of the ſociety was particularly directed to the concluſions which would then be adopted; and that the advices iſſued, would be regarded as clearly indicating, not only the temper and ſpirit, in which the national yearly meeting had acted, but alſo as pointing out, to the ſubordinate meetings, that line of conduct, in the exerciſe of the diſcipline

pline towards delinquents, which the repreſentative aſſembly of the whole ſociety in Ireland had then concluded to recommend. The following minutes are therefore inſerted, for the purpoſe of ſhewing what ſpecies of conduct, it is apprehended, the national yearly meeting had chiefly in view, when it recommended that "our chriſtian diſcipline be properly ſupported in "the right line and ſpirit."

"And it is the ſenſe and judgment of this meeting, "that where any marry by the prieſt, or *in any other* "manner, *contrary to the eſtabliſhed rules* of the ſociety, "they ſhall be dealt with, in a *ſpirit of chriſtian love* "and *tenderneſs*, agreeably to our known diſcipline; "and that, after the commiſſion of ſuch offence, their "*collection** ſhall not be received, *nor ſhall they be re-* "*lieved in the manner of poor friends*, nor be admitted "to *ſit in meetings of diſcipline*, until they be reſtored "into unity with the monthly meeting to which "they belong.

"And we earneſtly adviſe, that you watch dili- "gently over one another for good, and that you deal "in due time with ſuch offenders, endeavouring to "reclaim and reſtore them by brotherly admonition "and counſel; but where, *after patient waiting*, you "find

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* The meaning of this is, that no contribution ſhall be received by the ſociety from ſuch delinquents, for the purpoſe of adminiſtering to the neceſſities of its indigent members, who are aſſiſted out of a fund raiſed by means of theſe voluntary collections.

" find that your *continued labour of love* hath not its " defired effect, that you neglect not *to teſtify againſt* " and *diſown* ſuch perſons; that the end and deſign " of friends in ſettling a wholeſome diſcipline among " us may be anſwered"—1744—1783.—Extracts from the minutes and advices of the yearly meeting, &c. under the head MARRIAGE, No. 12, page 70.

" This meeting being ſorrowfully affected under " the conſideration of divers in our ſociety, entering " into marriage with ſuch as are not of the ſame " faith; or being married, in *a manner contrary to* " *our eſtabliſhed* rules, with *ſuch as are in profeſſion* " *with us*; to prevent which, many minutes, directing " dealing with ſuch offenders, have from time to time " been made; but the ſaid minutes not appearing to " extend to PARENTS and GUARDIANS, that may " be *conſenting* to, or *encouraging ſuch marriages*; it is, " therefore, the direction of this meeting, when that " appears to be the caſe, that ſuch PARENTS or " GUARDIANS, ſo offending, be dealt with in a " ſpirit of *chriſtian love* and *meekneſs*; and unleſs ſatis- " faction be given to the monthly meeting in which " ſuch circumſtances may fall out, that a *teſtimony go* " *forth for the clearing of truth againſt ſuch* OFFEN- " DERS—1752." " Extracts" &c. No. 13, page 70.

" If there be any ſuch groſs errors, falſe doc- " trines, or miſtakes, held, by any profeſſing truth, as " are either againſt the validity of Chriſt's ſufferings, " blood, reſurrection, aſcenſion, or glory in the Hea- " vens, according as they are ſet forth in the ſcrip- " tures;

" tures; or any ways tending to the denial of the " heavenly man Chriſt; ſuch perſons ought to be " *diligently inſtructed* and *admoniſhed*, by faithful " friends, and not to be *expoſed*, by any, to public " reproach; and where the error proceeds from *igno-* " *rance* and *darkneſs* of their underſtanding, they " ought the *more meekly* and *gently* to be *informed*; " but if any ſhall wilfully perſiſt in error in point of " faith, after being duly informed, then ſuch to be " further dealt with according to goſpel order; that " the *truth*, *church*, or *body of Chriſt*, *may not ſuffer by* " *any particular pretended member that* is ſo *corrupt.*— " 1694." W. E. " Extracts." &c. under the head DISCIPLINE, and MEETINGS for DISCIPLINE. No. 20, page 50.

The minutes of 1744, 1752, and 1783, relate ſolely " to marriage, and ſtate, that delinquents are to be " dealt with in a " *ſpirit of meekneſs*, *tenderneſs*, *and* " *chriſtian love.*" The minute of 1694 relates to offences in point of *doctrine*, but it may, perhaps, be regarded, as pointing out that line of conduct, which ought to be obſerved towards thoſe who are ſuppoſed to " *undervalue the ſcriptures.*" It directs that perſons, who imbibe erroneous opinions, ought to be " *dili-* " *gently* INSTRUCTED, and *admoniſhed* by *faithful* " *friends*, and not to be expoſed by any to public re- " proach, and where the error proceeds from *igno-* " *rance* and *darkneſs of their underſtanding*, they ought " the MORE *meekly* and *gently* to be INFORMED."

For the purpoſe of ſhewing the nature of that temper

and ſpirit in which the diſcipline of our ſociety was intended to be conducted, the excellent and important advice, contained in the following minute of the yearly meeting of 1735, is here inſerted.

" It is earneſtly recommended, as a means very " conducive to the preſervation of friends, a people of " one heart and one way, for the good of themſelves, " and their children after them, that the diſcipline of " the church, in the ſeveral meetings for that purpoſe, " be kept up and managed in a ſpirit of love and wiſ- " dom. Let all things in theſe meetings be done " with charity; let the love of God, in an eſpecial " manner, rule in your hearts; and therein, though " ſometimes *different ſentiments may ariſe*, yet will " every member have the *ſame thing* in view, viz. *the* " *glory of God, and the good of his church and people*; " and, in this ſingleneſs of heart, will beſt promote " the great end and ſervices of thoſe meetings. We " adviſe, therefore, upon this occaſion, that nothing " be done through ſtrife and contention, or from any " private views, or by the influence of numbers; but " *in lowlineſs of mind let each eſteem another better* " *than himſelf.*" Extracts, &c. under the head DISCIPLINE, and MEETINGS of DISCIPLINE, No. 12, page 46.

As the deviation from uniformity of conduct, during the time of public prayer, appeared to have occaſioned much pain to the ſociety, and had been deemed an offence of ſuch magnitude, as even to have been made a *cauſe of diſownment*, it was deemed important to

to aſcertain the ſentiment of the preſent national yearly meeting on this point, and the following paper was preſented by JOHN BEWLEY; but the meeting did not chooſe to take up the conſideration of the ſubject.

To the yearly meeting of Ireland.

29th of 4th month, 1801.

" The great offence that has been taken, on ac-
" count of ſome friends not ſtanding up, while others
" were at prayer; and the uncertainty that appears as
" to the origin, as well as expediency of the practice,
" induces an individual to query of the meeting, why,
" and how far it ſhould be inſiſted on?

" He hopes the meeting will give ſuch directions
" reſpecting it, as may ſtop the *over rigorous coercion*
" that is attempted to be practiſed in ſome places.
" And as an anſwer to the inquiries at foot ſeems ne-
" ceſſary, to enable friends to judge of the *degree of*
" *criminality* attendant on particular inſtances, it is
" hoped that the meeting will not refuſe it. And
" moreover, it is *become important to ſeveral conſcien-*
" *tious perſons*.

" Is the ſtanding up at prayer time, an act of re-
" verence to the GREAT BEING addreſſed?

" Is it an act of approbation of the MATTER and
" MANNER of the addreſs?

" Is it an approbation of, and unity with the PER-
" SON ADDRESSING?

" Or is it a form, for which *we cannot very well* " *account ?*"

On the ſubject of uniformity of conduct, during the time of public ſupplication, our anceſtors have left ſome minutes containing *advices*, but none that go the length of directing *poſitive diſownment* ;* and it ſeems probable, that it was not contemplated by them that ſuch extreme caſes would occur. The ſociety, in the preſent day, are not hereby limited, in framing whatever rules may appear to them to be rendered neceſſary by exiſting circumſtances ; but it will be admitted that *more deliberation* is required in the framing of *new* rules, than in directing the obſervance of thoſe that previouſly exiſt ; and ſurely it required peculiar caution before any new rules ſhould be framed, or any encouragement given, whereby the EXSCINDING POWER of the ſubordinate meetings ſhould be *further* brought into action, conſidering the weak ſtate of the ſociety, as it was at this very time, reported to the national yearly meeting. It may alſo be remarked, that, with regard to any deviation from the general practice, during the time of public ſupplication, it would be important to aſcertain, whether ſuch deviation was founded on ſlight or frivolous pretences, by perſons whoſe characters and conduct, in other reſpects, were not entitled to reſpect ; whether it proceeded from perſons of acknowledged piety, who had been appointed by

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* See extracts from the minutes and advices of the yearly meeting, under the head, " Miniſters and Elders, and their meetings." No. 2, page 89, and No. 17, page 97.

by the ſociety itſelf to fill the moſt important ſtations; and believed themſelves called upon to manifeſt their diſapprobation of particular miniſters, after having firſt diſcharged their duty to them, by private repreſentation, or more public remonſtrance, in the manner directed by the rules of the diſcipline for ſuch caſes;* whether

* It may be aſked how an Elder can poſſibly act ſo as to avoid giving pain to the Society, and at the ſame time to do juſtice to his own feelings, if the non-compliance here ſtated muſt be deemed a crime? If the Elder, after mature deliberation, cannot approve the miniſtry of a given individual, it becomes his duty to ſtate his diſapprobation, firſt to the miniſter, and, if this be without effect, then to the ſelect meeting; and, if the latter concurs not in judgment with the Elder, or if it ſhould concur with him, and on the report of their concurring judgment to the monthly meeting, the latter (whoſe deliberations ought certainly to be free and unfettered by the judgment of any, or of all the Elders united) ſhould ſtill ſanction the miniſter in queſtion—ſurely it muſt neceſſarily follow, that an Elder, under ſuch circumſtances, ought to *resign his office?* But further, after reſigning his office, how is he to act in the character of an *individual member,* whilſt a miniſter of whom he diſapproves appears in public prayer? If he outwardly conform, have not the audience a right to conclude that he approves and can join in with the ſupplications of the miniſter; and could he thus act without hypocriſy? How much better to diſpenſe with lifeleſs, unavailing, and uneſſential forms, and leave every man's conſcience open and free, on ſuch occaſions, rather than, by the adoption of rigour and compulſion, weaken thoſe feelings of brotherhood and affection, which

whether this deviation, from the cuſtomary obſervance of the *hat* or *poſture* in time of prayer, did really proceed from a conſcientious ſcruple againſt complying with thoſe obſervances; or laſtly, whether, independently of the tenderneſs and reſpect always due to the conſcientious ſcruples of others, ſuch obſervances could be deemed of ſufficient importance to conſtitute an eſſential, indiſpenſible qualification for church fellowſhip; and eſpecially in a ſociety, whoſe anceſtors believed themſelves, in a peculiar manner, redeemed from the ſpirit, and called out of the practice of thoſe various forms and ceremonies, reſpecting religious worſhip, by which, they were of opinion, other ſocieties were ſubjugated and miſled; and for *their* oppoſition to which forms and ceremonies, they had themſelves ſuffered cruel and manifold perſecutions, to the ſpoiling of goods, impriſonment, and even death.

In the "Grounds of a holy life, by Hugh Turford," (which book has repeatedly received the ſanction of our ſociety, by whom ſeveral editions in Engliſh and Welſh

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which, as proofs of the exiſtence of genuine chriſtianity, are far more valuable than all that *conformity* or *uniformity* has ever yet produced.

If non-compliance with the cuſtomary forms in time of public prayer, ſhould continue to be followed by expulſion from the ſociety; perhaps, for thoſe who are anxious to retain membership, the leaſt objectionable mode of expreſſing diſapprobations, would be quietly to withdraw from the aſſembly on ſuch occaſions.

Welſh have been circulated) there are ſome valuable remarks on the danger to which the profeſſors of religion are liable, from an undue attachment to *modes* and *forms*, in conſequence of which the proper buſineſs and real duties of life come to be undervalued, and ſometimes neglected. Nay, a further evil enſues. That diſcipline of the heart, and that regulation of the affections, which can alone produce genuine piety and virtue, are commuted for the obſervance of modes and forms. And ſuch perſons, not only invert the right order of things in their own conduct, but are generally the moſt forward to impoſe their peculiar opinions and practices on others, under the influence of ignorant and unprofitable zeal.

" And now my advice to all profeſſors of chriſtianity, " is, that, inſtead of *contending* about *forms* of godli- " neſs, they take heed to *that in themſelves* which *leads* " *to godlineſs*; inſtead of ſearching the ſcriptures for *a* " *right form*, they would labour *to live under the go-* " *vernment of a right ſpirit*; for ſuch are delivered " from the power of darkneſs, &c. &c. page 51. And again,

" And of this true ſelf-denial, I am apt to think " we have much leſs than former generations had; " for we ſee, though preaching abounds, pride, cove- " tous practices, with many other vices ſuper-abound; " and the reaſon to me is this, *conformity to outward* " *forms* of worſhip, being more taking with people " than the ſtrait gate and narrow way of ſelf-denial, " hath, in our preſent age, gotten the name of religion,

" chriſtianity,

" chriſtianity, and true godlineſs; inſomuch, that " ſhould a man add to his faith, virtue, and all other " graces, by which an entrance into the everlaſting " kingdom of Chriſt, is abundantly miniſtered, if " there be not withal a *conformity to ſome outward way* " *of worſhip*, he ſhall not paſs for a godly man. Nay, " though his converſation be never ſo heavenly, " though he be humble, lowly, meek, patient, " peaceable, though truth be in all his words, equity, " and faithfulneſs in all his deeds, though he viſits the " fatherleſs and the widow, and keeps himſelf unſpot- " ted from the world, if he be not in the exerciſe of " *ſome outward form of godlineſs*, he ſhall not be " counted religious, nor hardly a chriſtian.*

" CONFORMITY, in EVERY ſect, opinion, or per- " ſuaſion,

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* A NOTE upon this paſſage was inſerted, *for the firſt time*, in the 9th. edition of " The Grounds of a Holy Life," printed in 1769; and it has been continued in eight *ſubſequent* editions, the laſt being the 17th. There is nothing objectionable in the note; but, if it was not introduced by H. Turford's *own direction*, the editor was reprehenſible for not having *ſo ſtated* it. At preſent, it leads the reader to conclude, that the AUTHOR had deemed it neceſſary to inſert this note, for the purpoſe of guarding againſt *misapprehenſion*.

Caſes may *perhaps* occur, wherein additions or omiſſions, in the works of *authors*, may be juſtifiably made by *editors*. But as thoſe works are hereby rendered leſs GENUINE, does it not merit ſerious attention, whether any unauthorized additions or omiſſions ought ever to be made in the works, either of living or deceaſed authors, unleſs there be ſome appropriate *notice* thereof, for the *information of the reader?*

" ſuaſion, is become the character of a religious man, " and the *only band* of *unity* and brotherhood; if this " fail, there *ſoon* comes an *eſtrangedneſs*; and ſo there " is *much preſſing* into *conformities*, but little minding " the *mortification of ſin*, in order to a life of righteouſ- " neſs. But let our *zeal for conformity* be never ſo " much, it is he that *ordereth his converſation aright*, " that ſhall *ſee the ſalvation of God*." Page 62, 63, 64, edit. 1785.

See alſo ſome admirable reflections on this ſubject, in a diſcourſe, entitled, " Diverſity of Opinion, no " juſt cauſe of Diſcord." Sermons by JOHN BALGUY, M. A. vol. 1, page 59, edit 3rd.

We proceed now with the events of this narrative. It will be recollected, that the notification to the quarterly meeting of Ulſter, from John Rogers, jun. and Elizabeth Doyle, of their intention not to proceed according to the uſual mode of the ſociety, was dated the ſeventh of twelfth month, 1800, and the marriage took place on the *fourth* of the *third* month following. The advices of the yearly meeting had been iſſued *ſubſequently* to that event, and it remains now to be ſeen in what manner they were acted upon, and what effects were thereby produced.

NINTH MONTH.

FIVE members of the ſociety, (one of whom had recently been CLERK to the monthly meeting of Lurgan) who were preſent as witneſſes, and had thereby given a ſanction to the aforeſaid marriage, between John Rogers,

Rogers, jun. and Elizabeth Doyle, were, *on that account*, diſowned by the following minute of the monthly meeting of Lurgan, held the nineteenth of ninth month, 1801.

"The caſe of thoſe friends whoſe conduct in af-
"fiſting to join together, *under the form of a mar-*
"*riage ceremony*, two members of our ſociety in
"Liſburn, has long been cauſe of painful exerciſe to
"this meeting, hath again at this time occupied our
"ſerious attention; and after having ſolidly, and we
"truſt, in a degree of brotherly ſympathy, deliberated
"thereon, we are of the judgment, that they, viz.
"JOs. WILLIAMS, jun. "MARGARET PIKE,
"JOHN COURTENAY, jun. AND
"MARY CHRISTY, "MARY DAWSON,
"have diſſolved the bond of unity with us, by acting in
"violation to our known rules, and perſiſting, contrary
"to the advice of their friends, to plead for a conduct,
"evidently tending to introduce irregularity and con-
"fuſion into our ſociety; and that we no longer con-
"ſider them as members thereof, until they manifeſt
"a diſpoſition to ſubject themſelves to that diſcipline
"and good order which, we believe, has been eſtab-
"liſhed amongſt us, in the *love and wiſdom of truth*."

A ſhort time after the date of the preceding minute, MARY (the wife of JAMES) CHRISTY, and one of the perſons named therein, was viſited by ſickneſs, during the progreſs of which ſhe not only manifeſted no uneaſineſs at the ſtep for which the ſociety had diſowned her, but repeatedly expreſſed the contrary.

trary. She enquired of a beloved medical friend, who attended her, "what he thought as to the event," and ſaid "he need not be afraid of ſpeaking plainly, for "though the proſpect of eternity was awful, and ſhe had "nothing to boaſt of, yet ſhe felt no diſmay." At another time, ſhe ſaid "ſhe had no wiſh to live, except on "her huſband's and children's account, and, expreſſing "reſignation as to herſelf, added, perhaps ſhe could not "go in a better time." The night before her deceaſe ſhe expreſſed herſelf repeatedly, with much ſerioufneſs: ſaying, (among other things) how "watchful and care-"ful we ought to be to have our conduct regulated." She mentioned our predeceſſors, and added, "but we "have ſomething better to look to; for all have their "*own* feelings, all have a right, an undoubted right to "attend to their own feelings, from the higheſt to the "meaneſt, and even children; and it is dangerous to "go in the footſteps of others." Through life ſhe had been diſtinguiſhed for benevolence, meekneſs, and gentleneſs of manners; and, at the approach of death, her mind was mercifully preſerved, under the influence of much ſweetneſs and ſerenity.

SAMUEL STEPHENS of Dublin, who was mentioned before, MARTHA BAILEY of Liſburn, WILLIAM JAMES HOGG then reſiding in Belfaſt, MOSES MATCHETT, near Richill, and RUTH JOHNSON, of Antrim, have alſo been diſowned by the *monthly meetings* to which they *reſpectively belonged*, for attending the *aforeſaid marriage*; and, in the caſe of William James Hogg it was added, for withdrawing from the attendance of meetings. Moſes Matchett had appeared

repeatedly

repeatedly, as a minister; but *had not been admitted, in that character, a member of the select meeting of ministers and elders*. And having travelled as a minister, and appointed meetings for public worship, without *previously* obtaining the *concurrence of the society*, this became one of the grounds on which he was disowned, it being contrary to the established rules.

Thus were TEN persons disowned for being present at the marriage of John and Elizabeth Rogers, besides the parties married, and they had all been *previously* regarded as respectable members of the society.

Some time after the disownment of Martha Bailey, she was married to a person, *who was also not a member of our society*; and they adopted a mode, similar to that used by J. and E. Rogers. On this occasion, ROBERT TRAIL, of Belfast, (being a *nephew* to M. Bailey) attended the marriage, as a witness, and read, in the presence of the parties and of the other witnesses, a certificate of the marriage contract, then signed. For this act he was *disowned* by the monthly meeting of Lisburn.

It may here be remarked, that Martha Bailey could not marry according to the rules of our society, because *none but its members* are permitted so to marry. She must therefore of necessity, either marry by a priest, which her conscience forbade; cohabit with the object of her affections, without any ceremony at all, which her virtuous feelings forbade; forego a connexion, from which she had the prospect of deriving comfort

comfort and happineſs; or finally, adopt, that form of marriage which, after mature deliberation, ſhe conceived to be a ſtrictly proper and ſolemn one; and which ſhe knew was conſidered in the ſame light, by perſons of upright and conſcientious minds, whom ſhe had been accuſtomed to regard with reſpect and eſteem. Under ſuch circumſtances, ſhould it have been deemed culpable, by any *religious* ſociety, for one of its members thus to countenance a relation and friend, who was preparing, in this ſerious manner, to diſcharge the intereſting and important duties of domeſtic life? It may indeed be queſtioned, whether ſuch a proceeding, on the part of the ſociety, was conſonant to, or could be juſtified by, either the letter or the ſpirit of any of its exiſting rules.

JAMES CLIBBORN, a MINISTER, much and deſervedly eſteemed and beloved by all who knew him, addreſſed the following letter to the monthly meeting of which he was a member.

"*To Friends of Moat monthly meeting.*"

"I feel ſo much love and affection for you, that I "may ſay, nothing ſhort of a ſettled perſuaſion that it "is the will of Him whom it is my duty and intereſt "to obey, could induce me to inform you, that I do "not any longer conſider myſelf a member of your "ſociety; becauſe I believe, and I expreſs my belief "ſorrowing, that the ſociety has generally departed "from their profeſſed principle, and are erecting other "things as ſtandards in the room thereof. I have

"weighed

" weighed and conſidered theſe things ſeriouſly, and " the reſult thereof is *heartfelt diſunity with ſeveral* " *acts of the general meetings of this ſociety, and with* " *much of the miniſtry and conduct of many of their* " *active members*. Notwithſtanding my withdrawing " from your ſociety, I continue to profeſs to be " led by that inward principle of light and grace, " which is graciouſly beſtowed on all mankind; and " though I have no proſpect of uniting with any ſect " or party, or regularly attending any place appropria- " ted for worſhip, yet I humbly hope to be found in " the performance of that worſhip, which Jeſus Chriſt " pointed the attention of the woman of Samaria unto, " when he informed her, that the hour cometh when " ye ſhall neither at this mountain, nor yet at Jeruſa- " lem, worſhip the father—for the hour cometh, and " now is, when the true worſhippers ſhall worſhip " Him, in ſpirit and in truth: and I know that this " acceptable ſpiritual worſhip is not confined to time, " to place, nor to form.

" My withdrawing from your ſociety is the reſult " of ſolid, diſpaſſionate conſideration:—with real affecti- " on I ſubſcribe myſelf your friend in ſincerity,

(Signed) " JAMES CLIBBORN."

Hall, thirtieth of ſixth month, 1801.

Extract from the proceedings of the men's monthly meeting, held in Moat, fifth of eight month, 1801.

" The conſideration of the caſe of JAMES CLIB- " BORN, referred by laſt monthly meeting to this,

" being

" being resumed; and the letter, addressed by him " to this meeting, read and *deliberately considered*; the " reasons therein given, and the manner in which " they are expressed, appearing to *leave no room for* " *labour of love with him*, we are concerned to tes- " tify, that in as much as the said JAMES CLIB- " BORN has withdrawn himself from our religious " society, and resigned his right of membership " therein, on the alledged principle of duty; that it " is the united judgment of this meeting that his " resignation be accepted of, that he no longer be " considered a member, nor we in any respect ac- " countable for his future conduct among men.

" A true copy, per order,

" JOHN RUSSEL, Clerk."

And the following is an extract of a letter, dated thirteenth of the fifth month, 1802, from James Clibborn, on his being applied to, by a friend, for a copy of the preceding minute:

" I received thine of the 9th inst. and am disposed " to comply with thy desire, by relating the conduct " of Moat monthly meeting, in my case, so far as I " know.

" My notification was read on the day it was first " presented; receipt acknowledged by minute, and " further consideration deferred till next monthly " meeting. Next meeting it was read again, and the " minute, which I now send thee, was made. Some " time after, a copy was sent to me. I NEVER *was*

" *visited*,

" *viſited, officially or otherwiſe,* by ANY *member of Moat*
" *monthly meeting* on the occaſion, or EVEN SPOKE TO
" *on the ſubject by* ONE *of them.*

" Of late I am ignorant of the proceedings of
" the ſociety any where: my deſire to know their
" affairs decreaſes. I am *quietly*, and I hope *grate-*
" *fully* content with my lot. I am nothing; yet,
" through adorable, unutterable, unmerited, lov-
" ing kindneſs, my ſoul, at times, is affected, under
" the ſenſible enjoyment of lying down low and con-
" tent, beſide the ſtill waters; yea, even partaking of
" the water of that river, the ſtreams whereof make
" glad the whole heritage of God. Unmerited fa-
" vour, conferred on an unworthy worm! What ſhall
" I render to the Lord for all his mercies and bene-
" fits? I feel the pure love renewedly ſhed abroad in
" my heart; it overflows all man-made limitations; it
" embraces ALL; it rejoices in its liberty, and caſts
" a look of pity at thoſe who are galled with the cor-
" roding chains of bigotry and ſuperſtition."

EIGHT MONTH.

ANN ROBINSON, of Moate, who had *occaſionally* appeared as a MINISTER, reſigned her membership, and ſent in the following paper:

" Ann Robinſon informs the men's and women's
" monthly meeting of Moate, that, nothing ſhort of
" believing it a duty, influenced me to withdraw
" from ſociety with the people called quakers; and I
" requeſt to be no longer conſidered a member of

" them

" them ; believing that true religion doth not conſiſt
" merely in any form, but that true worſhip proceedeth
" from the heart, independent of time or place ; *that*
" the Lord looks at, who ſeeth not as man ſeeth ; and
" I believe your ſociety, with conſiderable individual
" exceptions, are as deficient as others, in attending to
" this inſpeaking word ; though you profeſs no leſs
" than to be led thereby, yet live far from this ſaving
" wiſdom, having loved this preſent world, its honours
" and profits, and reſted in a form that cannot make
" perfect. We may be daily convinced outward rule
" doth not preſerve from evil, but an implicit atten-
" tion to the divine gift in the mind. *That*, all have
" received, and are accountable for, and if faithfully
" attended to, it would ſhew the bleſſed effects of
" true religion, in oppoſition to man's contrivance,
" and will-worſhip, let it be ever ſo ſpecious, the pre-
" tention ever ſo high. The ſociety, inſtead of *exalt-*
" *ing* this *truly noble ſtandard*, are deſirous only of en-
" forcing *obedience to its rules*, and to *the bible* ; not di-
" recting to this *alone true ſtandard*, the *witneſs for*
" *God in the mind*. And though I believe the bible
" contains *much inſtructive communication*, I alſo believe
" it *has wrong ſentiments* ; and has been accommo-
" dated to party views ; therefore, inſtead of being ſet
" higher, needs to be brought to the true rule, that
" will, I believe, *approve* of *many things* it contains,
" and *oppoſe others*. That the Almighty Being, per-
" fect in wiſdom, who changeth not, did, in any age
" of the world, *command war*, I do not believe ;
" but that it proceeded, then as well as now, from
" evil. I have often thought the contrary opinion,

" much tended to foſter the evil practice, againſt " which I know of no ſociety that lifts up a pure " ſtandard. I have been charged, under the ſuppoſed " influence of revelation, with *deiſtical* and *atheiſtical* " opinions. I deny both, in the common acceptation " of the terms; as ſimply *deiſt* only means *god-iſt*; " for I fully believe in the *revelation of God's will in* " *the heart*, neceſſary for ſalvation. And that there is " a God, all nature abundantly and beautifully con- " firms. *Who then can be an atheiſt*; or *where* can be " the *atheiſt's hope?* Nor ſhall truth be ſilent becauſe " folly frowns; but will ultimately prevail over all " oppoſition. If I fall, that will be my own great " condemnation; I know I am far from perfect; " for truth will ſtand, though all forſake it; and the " term is not applicable to any religious aſſociation " that I know; for this is truth, to *do juſtly*, *love* " *mercy*, and *walk in humble obedience* to the *divine law*, " *revealed in the mind*; they that forſake *this* rule, do " indeed forſake TRUTH."

8th Month, 1801.

SIXTH MONTH.

ABRAHAM SHACKLETON of Ballitore, who had been for ſome years in the ſtation of an ELDER, was viſited by direction of the monthly meeting of Carlow; and, in conſequence thereof, he addreſſed to that meeting the following letter.

To

To the Monthly Meeting of Carlow.

" Abraham Shackleton had a viſit from T. W. and " W. L. on behalf of your meeting, he ſuppoſes, " in conſequence of an order from laſt quarterly " meeting, to deal with defaulters in attendance of " religious meetings (ſo called). As the manner of " this viſit to me was not comfortable, and the viſit " did not reſult agreeably, I am diſpoſed to inform " the meeting of my decided ſentiment on matters " urged at that time.

" Firſt, I do not *diſown* the *ſociety*, nor any *ſociety* " of men, nor *any man*; I am a man, ſubject to like " paſſions as other men, and like frailties; I cannot " therefore *diſown* any, but would rather *ſeek the good* " *of all men, continually whilſt I live.*

" To *diſown*, is to give over to a reprobate ſtate; " it has the *darkneſs* and *malignity* of *perſecution* in " it.

" Secondly, though I diſown not men, I diſown " the principle of *congregated ſocieties*, of *religion* " *houſed up*, which has a tendency to ſeparate the af- " fections of man from man, operating like political " diſtinctions in civil ſociety, and very much tending " to lay waſte thoſe *brotherly ſympathies*, by which *all* " the ſons of men are, or ought to be, *united* in *com-* " *mon intereſts.*

" Theſe diſtinctions, whatever good they may

" have produced to individuals, in the days of igno-
" rance, and the gloominefs of religious bigotry and
" blindnefs, I am perfuaded *the day is come* for their
" *annihilation*; and that they ought not to be *found*
" *any more at all*: but that *all* men every where *love*
" *as brethren*, and own no man nearer or dearer for
" any outward circumftance (of this kind) than ano-
" ther; feeing that all men are created of one blood,
" and *all* are *children of* ONE HEAVENLY BENIG-
" NANT FATHER, *all the world over*.

" Hiftory difplays the injury this miferable policy
" and plan of diftinction has heretofore made: what
" is *profanely* called SACRED HISTORY, difplays in-
" ftances of one man flaying another, on this vain and
" unreafonable pretence; 'till the people, abfurdly
" calling themfelves the LORD'S people, became as
" marked with violence and blood as any people,
" which, what is called, profane hiftory has on re-
" cord; wars on account of religion, that is, this arro-
" gant and frivolous pretence to divine partiality of
" favour, being commonly the bloodieft of all.

" Thirdly, hence my fentiment is, that as no
" DISTINCT SOCIETY ought to exift, fo neither ought
" there to exift any BOOK, having particular DOGMAS
" of belief, by which that fociety is to be diftin-
" guifhed; the *abfurdities contained in your bibles, being*
" *a fufficient indication to any unprejudiced mind for*
" *their annihilation*; that religion may flow, as freely
" as the light of day, from man to man, from heaven
" to earth; that, according to the prediction, " truth

" may

" may ſpring out of the earth," which hath hitherto " borne the curſed crop of weeds and deformity; and " that, thus peculiarly bleſſed, righteouſneſs may " look down on it from heaven.' As an inſtance of " incongruity in the bible, I refer you to Pſalm, chap. " 136, v. 15.

" Fourthly, as you profeſs kindneſs for me, ſo my " friendſhip for you ſuggeſts a warning to you, that " you be very cautious of attempting to withſtand the " work of omnipotence: which if ye do, ye will " receive injury in your ſeveral individual ſtates, as " he who attempts to ſtop the flowing of the ocean. " It is my ſentiment, that the *ſpirit of judgment is* " *departed from you* and your *meetings of diſcipline*, " and that all your exertions is a vain labour, and a " groping in the dark, and a work of errors; and " that, out of the life, ye will only frame images, " and end in confuſion; yea, that every founder will " be more and more confounded.

" I warn you then to avail yourſelves of the wiſe " advice of GAMALIEL in Acts 5, 'leſt haply ye " be found even to fight againſt God."

" ABRAHAM SHACKLETON."

28*th 6th Month*, 1801.

The preceding letter was preſented to the monthly meeting; and the *previous* peruſal of it was referred to *a committee of the members then preſent*.—Their report was made; the letter was deemed improper

proper to be read in that meeting; and the following minute of disownment was issued.

Carlow monthly meeting, held the tenth of seventh month, 1801.

"Account is returned to this meeting, that two "of the friends, appointed to visit such as decline the "attendance of our religious meetings, did visit several of that description: and this meeting being further informed, by one of said friends, that an opportunity being taken with Abraham Shackleton, "*he declared to him, that he renounced the society.*— "And his case being maturely considered by this "meeting; and the brotherly labour, that has been "extended to him, proving ineffectual, we no longer "consider him as a member of our society, or answerable for his conduct."

A copy of the preceding minute was delivered to Abraham Shackleton, and he addressed the following letter to the clerk of the monthly meeting of Carlow.

"Joshua Haughton,

"I write to thee, as clerk to the monthly "meeting, on the subject conveyed in thy letter "of the 18th; the whole of which is new and unprecedented. Apprehensive that your messengers "would not convey a just report, as their communication was vague and undefined, I put my "sentiments in *writing*, in which I stated what I "repeatedly said to W. L. that *I would not disown the* "*society*.

" *ſociety*. Strange to tell, you refuſed the report, " written and ſigned by my own hand, and took the " report from your delegate, contrary to my real ſen- " timent, and proceeded upon it: founding your con- " cluſion on this falſe evidence, you declare me ſepa- " rate and diſunited from you. I do not wiſh to re- " verſe this ſentence: but, on your account, I am " ſorry. Pretending, as you do, to be a people, " judging for the truth, I thought I could do no " leſs than ſignify to thee, the active perſon in this " buſineſs, my ſenſe of the injuſtice of this proceed- " ing and teſtify againſt it. I again encloſe thee my " paper, which I again deſire may be read in the " men's and women's meetings. It contains matter " that truly belongs to them, and which ought not " to be withheld. The preſent extraordinary pro- " ceedings convince me that my paper is applicable " to the ſtate of the ſociety. If, as I expect, in your " next meeting, you confirm the injuſtice of your " proceedings, and refuſe to read my paper, then let " it be returned to me.

" I wiſh you to conſider, whether you, in your " own will, or in the will, of the friends ſent by the " quarterly meeting to aſſiſt in your counſels, or other " larger body, acting as in diſcipline, and judging as " in the capacity of a religious ſociety, can poſſibly " ſeparate from the *unity of the ſpirit*, which is bound " up in *the bond of precious peace*. Conſider what you " are doing. Are you in the capacity of judging for " God? or will not one or two, acting REALLY *in* " *his ſpirit*, *in his power*, and *in his love*, over-rule all

" your

" your church cenſures, and confound your church " government, which you uphold in *formality*, and " not in the *precious life*. If this be your principle of " action, what will ſet limits to your uſurped power? " or can *any girdle*, but the *truth*, ſtrengthen and " give activity to the *ſpiritual man?*

ABRAHAM SHACKLETON."

8th month, 1801.

Upon the receipt of this letter, the monthly meeting acted in the ſame manner as it had done with reſpect to the preceding letter, which was again preſented. Both were deemed improper to be read in the meeting.

It would not comport with, either the limits, or the deſign of, this NARRATIVE, to enter upon the diſcuſſion of doctrinal opinions, reſpecting which, the Society, and thoſe who have ſeparated from it may differ.*

To

* Of the ſeparatiſts it may be remarked, that they have not diſſociated as a *body*, nor formed a *new sect*, neither have they, as yet, joined themſelves to any *other* ſociety. The conſiderations and circumſtances, which have led to their ſeparation, have been various. Under the influence of theſe, they have acted as *individuals*, independent of each other, and reſponſible ſolely, each for his own conduct and opinions. As their ſeparation from the ſociety may reaſonably be preſumed

To every individual belongs the SACRED RIGHT, and upon every individual devolves the IMPORTANT DUTY, not only to think, compare, and conclude for HIMSELF, in matters of religion; but alſo, according to his ability, to inſtruct, to aſſiſt, and to *encourage* his brother, in this eſſential employment. "To HIS "OWN MASTER HE STANDETH OR FALLETH;" and it is incumbent on ALL, in the diſcharge of both their individual and their ſocial duties, not only to attend to this momentous truth *themſelves*, but to remember, that in the application of it, *every other human being* is *equally* intereſted.

There are doubtleſs many ſerious and well inſtructed perſons, to whom, ſome of Abraham Shackleton's opinions will occaſion conſiderable pain. And though, on the grounds already ſtated, we forbear to inquire whether thoſe opinions could be juſtified at the bar of impartial reaſon, yet it is impoſſible not to regard the ſtrong and unqualified terms, in which ſome of his aſſertions are expreſſed, as a direct invaſion of the RIGHT of PRIVATE JUDGMENT in *others*, and to a degree of which, it is probable that, himſelf was not aware.

HE may believe that it would be *profane* for *him* to call the Scriptures *ſacred*. Others differ from him on this

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preſumed to have been connected with much ſerious reflection, it is, from *this very circumſtance*, probable, that no inconſiderable *diverſity of opinion* may exiſt among them.

this point. He does not mean to impute *profaneneſs* of *intention* to them; and to aſſert, that their *opinions* are *profane*, is to aſſume the very point at iſſue between the parties; and, in the place of an *advocate*, to uſurp the province of a *judge*.

Again—He may believe that "the abſurdities contained in the Bible are a ſufficient indication to any "unprejudiced mind for their *annihilation*." Other perſons are not only convinced that the Scriptures are a RECORD of the revealed will of God; but, having *experimentally* known them to be the *beſt guide to virtue and happiness*, they would regard the annihilation of the Scriptures, if indeed it were poſſible to effect it, as one of the *moſt lamentable events that could befal the human race*.

Were we, however, to admit that even *numerous* errors and abſurdities are contained in the ſcriptures, ſtill it may be aſked,—"would the *annihilation* of the "book be a proper mode of refuting them?" We know that, in the days of great bigotry and ſuperſtition, the ſuppreſſion of the *tranſlated* ſcriptures was a favourite expedient with the intereſted advocates for implicit ſubmiſſion to eccleſiaſtical tyranny; but ſurely the genuine friends of truth will not *now* attempt to imitate *ſuch* examples*.

It

* In the ROMAN CATHOLIC CHURCH, it has long been the practice to publiſh an EXPURGATORY INDEX, or catalogue of PROHIBITED books. All perſons who printed, imported, bought,

It is poſſible indeed, that by " the annihilation of " the Bible," Abraham Shackleton might intend only to

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bought, ſold, or had in their poſſeſſion, any of theſe books, were liable to fine, impriſonment, baniſhment, and eccleſiaſtical cenſure. Bookſellers were required to deliver to the Inquiſitors, or deputy Commiſſary, *once every year*, an inventory of all the books in their poſſeſſion, and to preſerve a copy of ſuch inventory, *conſtantly ready for inſpection*. In the year 1667, was publiſhed at Madrid, " Index Librorum " prohibitorum et expurgandorum noviſſimus, pro Catholicis " Hiſpaniarum regnis Phillippi IV." Sixteen introductory rules, and alſo ſeveral mandates to printers, bookſellers, &c. are printed with this index. The fifth rule (tranſlated) begins thus.—" Since experience has ſhewn, that from the *temerity*, " *ignorance*, and *malice* of mankind, more of *injury* than " *advantage*, hath ariſen from the permiſſion of the ſacred " books in the *vulgar tongue*:—the Bibles in the vulgar " tongue, with all the portions of them, either printed or " written, are prohibited, together with all ſummaries and " abridgements, though hiſtorical only, of thoſe Bibles or " books of ſacred ſcripture in the vulgar idiom or tongue."

In the twelfth Rule, is the following edict. " But pro- " hibited are all books, which may in future be compoſed " or publiſhed, in which ſhall be contained *Errors of Faith*, " or any thing *contrary* to what is *taught* and *approved* by " the *Holy Roman Church*."

Long experience has now confirmed this important truth, that—" a FREE PRESS is the GRAND BULWARK of all our " LIBERTIES, civil and religious." Yet, while the preſent generation, and eſpecially the ſubjects of the BRITISH and AMERICAN

to expreſs his opinion that its AUTHORITY ought n
longer to exiſt, as the SUPREME CRITERION, STAN
DARD

AMERICAN governments, ought to feel grateful to PROVIDENC
for the bleſſings derived from this ſource, it would perhaps b
both uncharitable and unjuſt, to attribute *wholly* to arbitrar
or mercenary views, theſe expurgatory regulations of th
darker ages. From the characters of ſome of the Pontiffs
and of many eminent and pious men, in the Romiſh church,
it may reaſonably be ſuppoſed, that theſe regulations were
framed and carried into effect, from, in part at leaſt, mo-
tives of pious and benevolent, though unenlightened zeal.
Indeed there exiſts a MINUTE, upon the records of our own
ſociety, which may be thought to have originated in motives,
not altogether unlike thoſe, which operated in the Romiſh
Church; though altogether unlike the policy of that Church,
in enforcing the obſervance of its canons by PAINS and PE-
NALTIES. There is no injunction to inflict either cenſure or
diſownment, upon thoſe who do not comply with the direc-
tions of the following minute. And as every RULE re-
quires ſome ſanction for ſecuring its obſervance, it would
ſeem that this minute ought to be regarded, not as one of the
RULES of the ſociety, but as the JUDGMENT or ADVICE of
the yearly meeting, held in London, 1801. Even in this
point of view, however, it may be hoped that the good ſenſe
of the ſociety will not long continue its ſanction to a regula-
tion, ſo evidently reſembling the policy of the darker ages.

" The antient and approved practice of our religious
" ſociety, reſpecting the reviſion of manuſcripts by the
" ſecond day's morning meeting, and the minutes on that
" ſubject, having been conſidered, it is the JUDGMENT of
" this

DARD, or CANON, by which the truth of religious opinions ſhould be determined. On this, as well as on all other religious ſubjects, his RIGHT to maintain his own opinions, and to publiſh thoſe opinions to the world, with the reaſons which to his mind appear to be evidences of their truth, ought to be RESPECTED and preſerved INVIOLATE. EQUALLY SACRED ſhould be the ſame RIGHT, on the part of thoſe *who differ from him*. And for *either* of the parties to aſſert, that the *other* muſt be under the dominion of *prejudice*, would indicate, at leaſt, the temporary abſence of thoſe virtues which are eſſential in the inveſtigation of truth. Humility and candour are ſeldom aſſociated with a confident perſuaſion, that *any* of the opinions, reſpecting which their advocates differ from other ſerious and reflecting perſons, are ABSOLUTELY and INFALLIBLY true. Whenever, amidſt oppoſing opinions, the importance of arriving at truth is *mutually admitted*, it muſt be by upright inquiry and temperate diſcuſſion, that this object is to be attained. Let theſe be conducted, by both parties, with candour, liberality, benevolence, and a ſincere deſire of the improvement of mankind; and

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'this meeting, that the ſaid practice be invariably obſerved: viz. That no *books, concerning the principles of friends be printed, without being carefully read*, and CORRECTED, if neceſſary, by the MORNING MEETING in London. *Extracts from the Minutes and Advices of the Yearly Meeting, &c. under the head* BOOKS, *No.* 5, *Page* 12." See ſome intereſting remarks reſpecting this minute in "An appeal to the ſociety of Friends on the Prim. Simplicity," &c. 1801, part 3, page 136, 137.

and although the ABETTORS OF SECTS AND SYSTEMS may dread and deprecate the agitation of such questions, yet the VOTARIES OF TRUTH and of PURE CHRISTIANITY will rejoice that the human faculties are employed on subjects worthy the attention of rational and immortal beings. They rest with unshaken confidence on the persuasion, that "truth is "great, and will finally prevail." They ask only that her peaceful triumphs may not be retarded by the opposition of *penal laws*, nor by, either the *allurements*, or the *restraints*, of any *extraneous* influence. They behold, without dismay, even the most hostile efforts of HERESY, INFIDELITY, SOPHISTRY, and ERROR, so long as the friends of undefiled religion are EQUALLY vigorous in their efforts to do justice to their own cause. Their *chief* discouragements arise from the thraldom of BIGOTRY, SUPERSTITION, and IMPLICIT FAITH;—from that supine indifference to all intellectual and moral improvement, which is produced by SENSUAL PLEASURES and WORLDLY PURSUITS;—and from that INDOLENT TEMPERAMENT, which can be roused to mental activity by no concerns, either of time, or of eternity.

Although, however, the RIGHTS of PRIVATE JUDGMENT seemed to require the preceding strictures upon the language employed by Abraham Shackleton, JUSTICE requires that we do not assume the particular opinions which he, or any other man, may express, as grounds for imputing to them OTHER opinions, which may *appear to us* to be the legitimate inferences of those

thoſe which they have avowed; but which, if imputed to them, they might ſincerely diſclaim.

Indeed this conduct becomes the more neceſſary, from the apparently haſty and unguarded manner in which he has expreſſed himſelf, in the two preceding letters. The ſtatement of ſome of his opinions, given in other parts of this narrative, and in the appendix, (ſee No. 2) as well as thoſe which he has frequently and publickly avowed, furniſh no grounds for believing that he regards the ſcriptures as deſerving of *indiſcriminate cenſure*. On the contrary, it is well known, that he ſincerely eſteems many parts of thoſe records, for the important facts, pious exhortations, and wiſe councils, with which they abound; and, with reſpect to the chriſtian religion, he has declared his firm belief in it, as the moſt pure revelation which the infinitely wiſe God has ever communicated to mankind. Candour therefore requires us to aſſume, that Abraham Shackleton has not *intentionally* advanced any opinons which he conceived would militate againſt the genuine intereſts of piety and virtue. He appears to have largely imbibed the doctrine of an inward, immediate, and univerſal revelation from God, manifeſted in the heart of *every individual human being*;—to the dictates of this revelation, he is of opinion, that the ſcriptures, and every other tradition, tenet, or ſyſtem, ought to be ſubjected;—and, under the influence of this tenet, he believes himſelf juſtified in rejecting ſeveral paſſages in the ſcriptures, as deſtitute of legitimate claim to divine revelation. Now it happens, that the very ſame paſſages are, by many other chriſtians, regarded, as evidently

dently proceeding from divine revelation. They venerate the ſcriptures as an authentic RECORD of REVELATIONS, communicated PURE from the INFALLIBLE GOD, but *recorded* by FALLIBLE MEN. And although, from the imperfections of thoſe by whom theſe revelations have been recorded, the inaccuracy of tranſcribers, the want of competent knowledge on the part of tranſlators, the frauds and interpolations of deſigning men, and various other circumſtances, ſome important truths may have been omitted, and ſome important errors, or even abſurdities, introduced, during the *lapſe of ſo vaſt a period of time*; yet ſtill, as the evidences for the TRUTH of the REVELATIONS, and for the general AUTHENTICITY of the RECORD, are clear and ſatisfactory to the minds of that claſs of chriſtians to which we now refer, they ſuffer not their veneration for thoſe grand truths and important diſcoveries, which are moſt clearly contained in the ſcriptures, to be leſſened by the imperfections and errors with which they are blended. They obſerve, with thankfulneſs, that many of theſe errors and imperfections have been detected by pious and learned men; and they rejoice in the expectation that, by the *continued* labors of theſe BENEFACTORS of mankind, every remaining important error and imperfection will, in time, be alſo detected. It is their opinion, that right reaſon and ſober criticiſm are the proper teſts by which the true meaning of the ſcriptures is to be aſcertained, and the genuineneſs and authenticity* of them to

* "A book may be *genuine*, without being *authentic*; "and a book may be *authentic*, without being *genuine*." See

to be determined, and they feel a confidence that all the eſſential parts will ſtand the ſevereſt examination. They have no wiſh to control any of their chriſtian brethren, who believe it right to form opinions concerning either the meaning or the truth of the ſcriptures, or concerning other religious ſubjects, from the dictates of *inward feeling* or of *apprehended individual revelations*. But unleſs the exiſtence of the individual revelation be demonſtrated by *adequate evidence*, the rational friends of the ſacred records maintain, that it is by an appeal to the genuine ſcriptures, interpreted by the ſame means which have been preſcribed for eſtabliſhing their truth, that ſubjects of religious controverſy, among chriſtians, are to be decided. They contend that right reaſon can never fail to approve every divine revelation, and that nothing ought to be admitted, as divine revelation, but that which is atteſted by ſuch evidence as right reaſon approves.

MUNGO BEWLEY, of Mountmelick, reſigned his office as an ELDER, and his wife, MARY BEWLEY, a MINISTER, (and daughter to the late JAMES GOUGH, who was mentioned page 33,) reſigned her memberſhip. Mary Bewley, on being applied to for a copy of her reſignation, and of the minute in conſequence thereof, wrote to a friend as follows:

" I ſhould not have the leaſt objection to comply

See this aſſertion, with ſome able remarks upon the difference between thoſe terms, in " AN APOLOGY FOR THE " BIBLE," addreſſed to THOMAS PAINE, by DR. WATSON, " BISHOP OF LANDAFF," page 34, edit. 8th.

" with thy requeſt, had I kept any copy of the *few* " lines I ſent to the monthly meeting. As I was then " deſirous of withdrawing from them *as quietly as I* " *could*, believing it right for me to cultivate *peace* and " *love in my own mind*, ſo that I wiſhed to *obliterate* " *every trace* of *their treatment of me*. However I have " been ſtriving to recollect; and, though imperfectly, " I think it was in ſubſtance—That feeling my " mind releaſed from what is called the bonds of reli- " gious ſociety, I was deſirous of being no longer " conſidered a member of theirs. This ſtep, I said, " was from no unworthy motive; but was on the " ground of *ſincerity*, the *reſult of mature deliberation*, " and a *perſuaſion of its rectitude*; and concluded with " adding ſomething, that I wiſhed to live in peace " with all mankind—My huſband ſent no paper in, " as he verbally expreſſed his deſire to reſign as an " elder, which was readily granted. *We were fur-* " *niſhed with no minute* from the meeting."

EIGHTH MONTH,

JOSEPH NICHOLSON of Belfaſt, who had been for ſeveral years eſteemed as an acceptable MINISTER; and had *repeatedly* travelled in that capacity, both in *Ireland* and *Great Britain*, with the *full unity* and *concurrence* of the Society in both countries, ſent in the following reſignation of membership.

To Friends of Liſburn Monthly Meeting.

" As I could not unite with you for ſome time " paſt,

" paſt, in the ſupport of ſuch a *miniſtry as you uphold*,
" nor in *your conducting the diſcipline of ſociety*, and as
" I apprehend that, by ſome late *deciſions* in more *ge-*
" *neral meetings*, *liberty of conſcience has been attempted*
" *to be abridged*, in order to promote *conformity* and *uni-*
" *formity* to *uneſſential tenets* and *practices*, wherein a
" deviation from the *ſtandard of rectitude* has been evi-
" dently manifeſted, as alſo a *departure in word* and
" *deed*, by *moſt*, *even of thoſe* who appear *zealous for the*
" *law*, from the *pure principle of light*, *life*, and *love*,
" *which is the only right bond of union in the univerſe*.

" On which account, as well as a *perſuaſion* that it
" is beſt for me, though *profeſſing this principle with you*,
" to inform you, that I can no longer conſider myſelf,
" as an aſſociated member of your ſociety, or any
" other, and requeſt you will not in future conſider me
" as ſuch, though at the ſame time, I remain with love,
" and deſire for your preſent and everlaſting well-
" being, your friend,

JOSEPH NICHOLSON."

" *Eighth Month*, 1801,

Upon which the following minute was iſſued.

" *Minute of the Monthly Meeting of Liſburn, held*
" *near Ballinderry, the* 15*th of* 10*th month*, 1801.

" THOMAS LAMB returns account, that *the viſit*
" was paid to Joſeph Nicholſon, and that he conti-
" nues to think it to be his duty to *recede from* our
" ſociety. This meeting therefore receives his reſig-

" nation, and no longer conſiders him as a member or " miniſter among us.

Signed on behalf of ſaid meeting,

JOHN BARCROFT, *Clerk.*

GEORGE THOMPSON, Schoolmaſter, was viſited by appointment of the monthly meeting of Liſburn, in conſequence of his opinions concerning the ſcriptures; but as no change in his opinions was hereby produced, a public teſtimony, in the following terms, was iſſued by the ſaid monthly meeting againſt him, as one with whom they could not hold fellowſhip.

" George Thompſon of Liſburn meeting, a mem- " ber of our religious ſociety, the people called " Quakers, was appointed to the important ſtation of " maſter to the ſchool near Liſburn, in which he " conducted himſelf, *we hope, pretty orderly for ſome* " *time*; till, *ſoaring* above the path of *true ſimplicity*, " he gave evident marks, both in writing and other- " wiſe, that he was not *on the ſame ground of belief*, " reſpecting the *ſcriptures of truth*, that *we are of*; " holding *many important parts* of them as *erroneous*, " which eventually *tends to invalidate the whole*, and " *ſubvert* the *faith of many*. *Sundry viſits* were paid " to him, and *endeavours* uſed, to prevail on him to " break off from theſe his *errors*, but to no purpoſe, " he ſtill perſiſting in acknowledging them.

" Now, in order to teſtify our diſunity with this " ſpirit, which has *ſorrowfully gone abroad* to the " *defilement*

" *defilement* of *many* in this day. We do hereby bear " our public teſtimony againſt the ſaid George Thomp- " ſon; nor can we hold fellowſhip with him, till he is " mercifully favoured to ſee the *fallacy* of theſe *rea-* " *ſonings* he has embraced, and in the *true light* be " enabled to *condemn* them."

In conſequence of the preceding teſtimony, the following letter was addreſſed to the monthly meeting by George Thompſon.

" *To the Monthly Meeting to be held in Liſburn, 9th Month 17th,* 1801.

" A copy of your paper of denial was handed to " me ſome time ago, by John Barcroft; in which " you inſinuate that my conduct in the School was not " ſo orderly of late, as it had formerly been. To " what you allude I know not. Was it becauſe I " could not join with you in upholding an *unſound,* " *formal,* and *lifeleſs miniſtry?*

" You ſay, " *I hold many important* parts *of the* " *ſcripture as erroneous, which eventually tends to* " *invalidate the* whole, *and ſubvert the faith of many.*" " What thoſe important parts are, you have not " thought proper to inform me, neither did your de- " puties point them out to me. Are they thoſe parts, " which hold up *the doctrine of atonement?* One of " your deputies has denied that doctrine alſo. But I " deny, that believing a *part* of them to be *erroneous,* " has a tendency to *invalidate* the *whole*; for, though

" a diamond

" a diamond may be hidden in a dunghill, it neverthe-
" leſs continues to be a diamond, though ſurrounded
" by rubbiſh, and thus it is with many truths in the
" ſcriptures.—But I am firmly convinced, that hold-
" ing up, and deifying books, as you are attempting
" to do, is that which, in *reality, ſubverts not only the*
" *faith*, but alſo *the ſouls of many*. With reſpect to
" the uncertainty, not only of the common tranſlation
" of the ſcripture, but alſo of every other, Robert
" Barclay has clearly pointed it out, Prop. 3d, Sect. 4th
" of his Apology. For my part, I cannot believe
" that a God of infinite goodneſs would appoint ſuch
" an uncertain rule, to lead mankind to happineſs,
" as the book called the Bible is:—a book, many
" parts of which contradict each other.

" With reſpect to thoſe ſo much extolled viſits, in
" which you ſay endeavours were uſed to prevail on
" me to break off from, what you call, my *errors*; I
" abſolutely deny that to have been the intention or
" tendency of them; they were not to *adviſe*, but to
" *catechiſe*; not to *admoniſh*, but to *condemn*; in order
" to which, they aſked me *every enſnaring queſtion*
" *that they could invent*, to draw ſomething from me,
" if poſſible, on which they could *ground* an *accuſa-*
" *tion*. But you may judge how competent they
" were to pay a *religious viſit*, when I inform you, that
" one of them *had ſlept a conſiderable time* in the meet-
" ing *(for worſhip)* juſt before they came to me. This
" I could prove by the teſtimony of ſeveral.

" When my letters to GEORGE NETTLETON were
" ſhewn

" ſhewn to me by JOHN CONRAN and THOMAS LAMB,
" I deſired them to make their objections to them,
" and I would anſwer them candidly; but John Con-
" ran's reply was, " *We have no objections to make* ;"
" and, what are you now doing but condemning me
" for thoſe letters to which *he had no objection to make ?*
" The argument he uſed to convince me that I was
" wrong, was, that by being ſo unwiſe as to promul-
" gate thoſe letters, I had loſt, what he looked upon,
" as a *comfortable livelihood.* What was this, but blam-
" ing me for not acting the hypocrite ? Oh ! baſe
" unworthy motive ! Oh ! the depravity of the
" mind that could advance it ! Surely it muſt be
" dead to every ſenſation of religion ! ! God for-
" bid that I ſhould ever act on ſuch an unſound prin-
" ciple.

" I long ago expreſſed my diſunity with the chief
" of the ſynagogue ; no wonder, therefore, that you
" cannot hold fellowſhip with *me* ; but you can hold
" fellowſhip with *wine-bibbers* and *libertines, ſome of*
" *whom* are, among you, *active members.* For the truth
" of this, I appeal to the *juſt witneſs which God has*
" *mercifully placed in the hearts of all.*

" After laying the above before you, for your
" conſideration, I feel my mind perfectly unanxious as
" to the event. Deſiring that you may ſee your true
" ſtate, ſo as to profit thereby, I am your well-wiſher.

" GEORGE THOMPSON."

Belfaſt, 9th month 16th, 1801.

This

This letter was permitted to be read in the monthly meeting, but produced no change in its concluſion reſpecting him The ſchool, mentioned in the teſtimony of diſownment, was eſtabliſhed by the quarterly meeting of Ulſter ; and the committee, to whom the ſuperintendance of it was entruſted, diſmiſſed the ſaid George Thompſon from his office of Schoolmaſter, in conſequence of the opinions for which the ſociety had diſowned him.

Anna Hill, Ruth Hill, and Elizabeth Bell, ſent in a joint letter of reſignation of their memberſhip to the monthly meeting of Liſburn ; held 12th of 11th month, 1801. Benjamin Thompson, of Derrymecaſh, alſo reſigned his memberſhip, by letter, dated 14th 2d month, 1802, addreſſed to the monthly meeting of Lurgan. In both theſe letters, the ſeparatiſts ſtate their diſſatisfaction with the formal and lifeleſs ſpirit in which the meetings of the ſociety appeared to them to be held ; and in the former of theſe letters it is added, " we cannot have " our minds bound by any mode or ſyſtem, which " does not allow liberty of conſcience."

FIRST MONTH,

William James Hogg, (who had been diſowned for attending the marriage of John Rogers, jun.) and Mary Ann Wood, were married at the houſe of James Christy, of Stramore, in the preſence of fifteen witneſſes, *of whom fourteen then were*, or *previouſly had* been *members* of the ſociety ; and a copy

copy of the certificate of this marriage is inſerted in "A Friendly Expoſtulation, by John Hancock," page 28, Iriſh edit.

For this offence againſt the rules of the ſociety, the aforeſaid Mary Ann Wood, was publicly diſowned by the monthly meeting of *Lurgan* in the following terms.

"Mary Ann Wood was educated in profeſſion with "us, the people called Quakers, and for a conſider- "able time after ſhe came into the bounds of this "meeting, was a *diligent attender* of our *meetings* "both for *worſhip* and *diſcipline*; but, for *want of at-* "*tending* to that *principle of grace in the heart*, which "has, in every age of the world, led the religiouſly "diſpoſed of *all* perſuaſions, to *unite in public worſhip* "to the Supreme Being, and in a particular manner "engaged our worthy predeceſſors to keep up their "religious meetings, through much oppoſition, trials "and afflictions, and which we believe would ſtill "lead thoſe, who attend to its pointings, in the ſame "path—ſhe became *lax* in the *performance of this ge-* "*nerally acknowledged duty*, and *at laſt altogether ab-* "*ſented herſelf* from our public aſſemblies, and *as one* "*wrong ſtep* generally leads to *another*; ſhe has ſince "departed from the *good order eſtabliſhed among us*, "by entering into *ſome kind of marriage contract*, with "a man not in membership with us, and in a manner, "which, we believe, has a tendency to encourage "*private* and *clandeſtine connexions*.

"We

" We therefore think it right for us, thus pub-
" licly to teſtify our *diſapprobation of the conduct* of ſaid
" Mary Ann Wood, and that we do not any longer
" conſider her a member of our ſociety."

The preceding teſtimony of diſownment was ſhewn to Mary Ann Hogg, previouſly to its being finally iſſued, by the direction of the monthly meeting of Lurgan, and ſhe then objected to that part, which imputes her ſuppoſed delinquency to the " *want of attending to* " *that principle of grace in the heart, which*" &c. &c.; remarking, that " if the ſerious and ſettled convictions " of her own mind were to be relied on, ſhe had not " acted CONTRARY *to the principle of grace in the* " *heart*, but in OBEDIENCE *to it*, in *thoſe very in-* " *ſtances which formed the grounds of the ſociety's pro-* " *ceedings againſt her.*"

It is ſtated as a part of the charge, that " ſhe *be-* " *came lax* in the performance of this generally ac-
" knowledged duty, and at laſt altogether abſented
" herſelf from our public aſſemblies, and as one *wrong*
" ſtep generally leads to another, ſhe has ſince," &c. &c.—On this ſhe alledges, " that, *in point of fact*, ſhe " did not decline the attendance of meetings *occaſion-* " *ally* or *gradually*, as the expreſſion (*lax*) ſeems to " imply, but that ſhe retired from them at *once*, and " then becauſe *ſhe believed it her duty ſo to do.*

It is to be regretted, that theſe circumſtances ſhould not have induced a reviſion of the teſtimony of diſownment in this caſe; for ſurely the ſubſtance, tem-

per,

per, and language of it, appear to be ill adapted to the occaſion; and are far from indicating that ſpirit of candour, meekneſs, and love, which is eſſential to the right conduct of all Chriſtian diſcipline. The character and conduct of Mary Ann Hogg were ſuch, as to afford no ground for doubting the ſincerity of her aſſertion, that ſhe had acted according to her beſt apprehenſion of duty, in thoſe caſes which were regarded as offences by the ſociety. Whether *ſuch* conduct be the reſult of *right* ſteps, or of *wrong* ones—whether it proceeds from attending to, or from the want of attending to "*the principle of grace in the heart*," ſhould not be haſtily pronounced by *frail* and *fallible* mortals, as this is beſt, and ſometimes only, known to that GREAT BEING, who is repreſented in the awful character of the SEARCHER OF HEARTS. The aſſertion, that "the principle of grace has, in *every* age of the "world, led the *religiouſly diſpoſed, of all perſuaſions, to* "*unite in public* worſhip to the ſupreme Being," cannot poſſibly be ſuppoſed to proceed from any wilful intention to miſrepreſent or miſlead; but ſurely it is liable to the imputation of blameable ignorance. And the alluſion to "private and clandeſtine connexions," together with the deſignation of the party by her MAIDEN NAME, ſome time *after ſhe had been married*, ſeem intended to convey inſinuations pointedly indelicate, and injurious both to the feelings and character of virtuous women.

That the marriages of the ſeparatiſts have, *thus far*, been conducted with ſuitable *publicity* and *decorum*, will, probably, not be denied. Indeed this is no more than

than might reaſonably be expected from perſons, acting under the influence of conſcientious feelings, fully impreſſed with the unpopularity of their conduct on this occaſion, and, therefore, naturally deſirous of furniſhing no *juſt* cauſe for cenſure. Still however, the mode of marriage which they adopt may be deemed liable to objection, in that no *definite mode* or *degree* of PUBLICITY is preſcribed;—nor is there any reference to a COMPETENT TRIBUNAL to inquire and decide, whether the parties intending to marry are free from ſimilar engagements to other perſons;—nor, whether there is any other reaſonable IMPEDIMENT or OBJECTION to their intended union. Whilſt ſuch marriages continue to take place between perſons of reſpectable characters and upright intentions, no actual inconvenience may reſult from the objections now ſtated. But it muſt be obvious that reſpectability of character, and uprightneſs of intention, may not always exiſt in parties deſirous of marrying; and therefore, under circumſtances where the judgment is peculiarly liable to be biaſſed by the affections, prudence may require that it ſhould not be left to individuals to decide for themſelves, or for thoſe relatives who are often tenderly intereſted in the reſult of ſuch connexions—what *mode* or *degree* of publicity ſhall be ſufficient, or what conſideration may be due to the claims or objections of others? If the lately adopted mode of marriage ſhould be more generally adopted, it may be preſumed that theſe objections will be properly obviated; and in the mean time, it will be admitted that it is of the higheſt importance, that ſocieties as well as individuals ſhould exercife

exercise a suitable care to discourage and prevent private and clandestine connexions. It may be questioned, however, whether the wish of the society to prevent such connexions would not be more likely to prove effectual, if, instead of resorting to CENSURE and DISOWNMENT on these occasions, it should be allowed for monthly meetings to permit such a deviation from the prescribed mode of marriage, as might satisfy the scruples of the truly conscientious members, and at the same time secure all the important barriers against private and clandestine connexions.

But, if the idea of conceding thus far, be totally inadmissible, and if the existing rules of discipline are to continue to be enforced, it will surely be admitted, that, for conduct, *resulting from* scruples of *conscience*, the society cannot consistently do more than *simply record the fact*, as an offence against its rules, and state *this* as the cause of exclusion from membership, without speaking of the parties in terms of censure, or passing judgment on the *motives* to their conduct. However remote from "a tendency to encourage *private* "and *clandestine connexions*" the conduct of the separatists might have been—nay, if the greatly improved mode of proceeding, in relation to marriage, which the national yearly meeting had itself adopted in the year 1800, had happened to be adopted by the separatists, *before it had been thus sanctioned*—is it not obvious that they would still have incurred disownment and censure, for acting contrary to the rules of the society, although they had adopted an improvement upon those rules?

MARY

MARY HOGG, for being preſent at the marriage of her ſon, William Hogg, was diſowned, as no longer a member of the ſociety, by the monthly meeting of Liſburn.

And, *for the ſame offence*, connected with the charge of not attending our religious meetings, SIX friends were alſo diſowned by the following minute of the monthly meeting of Lurgan, held at Grange, near Charlemont, 15th of 5th month, 1802 :

" This meeting having reſumed the conſideration " of the conduct of THOMAS PHELPS, JAMES " CHRISTY, WILLIAM DAWSON, SAMUEL SIN- " TON, HANNAH DAVIS, and SARAH DAWSON, " who have been under dealing for being preſent, " and aiding at a *diſorderly union* of a member of our " ſociety, with a perſon not in unity with us ; and who " have been in the practice of *abſenting themſelves* " *from the attendance* of our *religious meetings* ; and " although, through tenderneſs to the individuals, " and a diſpoſition to avoid the danger of a *haſty deci-* " *ſion*, we have hitherto deferred teſtifying againſt " them, hoping they might be favoured to ſee where " they had *ſtepped aſide* from that good order into which " our predeceſſors at the beginning were led ; and in " which we believe many of theſe, at times, have been " concerned to walk ; yet, as there appears no ground " to hope, that the *further* care of this meeting could " be attended with the good effect of *convincing them* " *of their error*, we think it right at this time to " clear

" clear ourſelves from the imputation of encouraging " *ſuch irregular conduct*; and declare that we cannot " *hold unity with them therein*, nor conſider them as " members of our ſociety, until they experience and " expreſs *condemnation* therefor.

" JOSEPH GOUGH, Clerk."

With reſpect to the charge of having " been in " the practice of abſenting themſelves from our reli- " gious meetings;" it may be remarked, that, though ſuch was the fact, yet there is reaſon to believe that it did not proceed from any abatement of religious zeal in the parties thus diſowned: but from diſſatisfaction with the miniſtry of the ſociety, and with the general temper and ſpirit, which influenced its proceedings; and from a perſuaſion, that, in order to avoid the appearance of ſanctioning this miniſtry, temper and ſpirit, it was neceſſary to decline the attendance of meetings.

Three of the perſons thus diſowned, had been in the ſtation of ELDERS; and as it is peculiarly their province to have the overſight and care of the miniſtry, the office of an elder is juſtly regarded as the *moſt important* of any in the ſociety. Hence it is deemed eſſential, that they ſhould be perſons who rule well their own houſes, whoſe lives and converſation are exemplary, who have happily experienced the work of religion in their own minds, and, having thus given ſuitable proofs of the *ſtability* of their attainments, manifeſt their qualifications for the duties of this important

portant office.* Now if the elders among us are, in reality, thus qualified, it will surely be admitted that

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* The following minutes, reſpecting the qualifications of elders, are inſerted from "Extracts from the minutes and "advices of the yearly meeting of friends held in London."

"This meeting recommends, that in the appointment "of elders, age or wealth may not be inducements to "your choice; but that ſuch as fear God, and love his "truth, in ſincerity, may be nominated for that ſervice, "who, being of clean hands, may comfort the feeble "minded and reprove the unruly with proper weight "1761."—*Diſcipline and meetings for diſcipline, No.* 18, *page* 50.

"As to the elders among you, and thoſe whom God, "having endued with knowledge, and experience of the "cleanſing operations of his ſpirit, hath concerned to miniſ-"ter unto others, let them adorn the doctrine of the goſpel, "by ſhewing, out of a good converſation, their works with "meekneſs of wiſdom. Such as theſe being clothed with "humility, and exemplary to the flock, are worthy of DOU-"BLE HONOUR, and to be HIGHLY ESTEEMED in the Church "of Chriſt." 1751, P. E. *Miniſters and elders, and their meetings, No.* 8, *page* 92.

"You that are elders and overſeers in the church, and "concerned in the maintenance of good order, and preſer-"vation of diſcipline, keep your own hands clean, and gar-"ments unſpotted; that you may rebuke with authority; "and, being clothed with the meekneſs and gentleneſs of "the

that their conduct, on occaſions like thoſe which had recently occurred, ſpeaks a language which is entitled to ſerious attention. The previous reſignations of their offices, by the elders, whoſe diſownment has been referred to, had been rendered abſolutely unavoidable by the conduct of the quarterly meeting of ULSTER; for how could they, with any conſiſtency, retain the overſight of, and be deemed reſponſible for, the miniſtry, in their reſpective meetings, if the deliberate and repeated repreſentations of their diſſatisfaction continued to be not merely *diſregarded*, but *oppoſed?* It will be recollected that this diſſatisfaction was not *confined to the three elders*, juſt mentioned; but that the repreſentations of diſſatisfaction, which they had made, were, with the exception of only two individuals, concurred in by the *ſelect meeting of miniſters and elders* for the *whole province of Ulſter*, at *two diſtinct quarterly meetings*. Either then this diſſatisfaction ſhould have been ſanctioned by the quarterly and monthly meetings, or it muſt follow that thoſe meetings had *appointed* and *retained*, in the ſtation of ELDERS, *throughout a whole province*, perſons, who, *in the judgment of the ſociety itſelf*, were not fit for that office.

Theſe elders cannot be charged with *precipitancy*,

O in

" the lamb, may ſtedfaſtly perſevere in the ſupport of that " teſtimony committed to you: that when the great ſhepherd " ſhall appear, you may come before him with reverent aſſu- " rance, and receive the reward of, ' Well done, good and " ' faithful ſervant; enter into the joy of thy Lord.' 1753. " W. E." *No.* 10, *page* 93.

in thoſe proceedings which led to their ſeparation from the ſociety. And however we may regret their reſignation as elders, and their withdrawing from the attendance of meetings for diſcipline, yet how could they have acted otherwiſe, under the very peculiar circumſtances, in which they ſtood? How could their meetings for worſhip and diſcipline be regarded as opportunities, either of edification or of comfort, if a miniſtry, which they diſapproved, was to continue to be impoſed on them? How could they take "ſweet "council together," or harmoniſe in tranſacting the affairs of the church, with thoſe who not only thus differed from them in ſentiment, but who could not be ſatisfied without publicly diſowning and cenſuring their brethren, for conduct reſpecting marriage; although that very conduct was ſtated to be in ſtrict conformity with what the parties conſcientiouſly believed to be their duty.

They who are acquainted with what uſually belongs to the temper and character of ELDERS in our ſociety, will, indeed, eaſily believe, that much ſerious reflection and ſelf examination would naturally take place, before they could be induced to adopt and perſevere in ſuch open avowal of diſunity with the body. The poſſible effects of ſuch conduct on *their own* minds, and its obvious influence in the way of *example* on *others*, and eſpecially on their own *children*, and the *youth* in general, were conſiderations to which it cannot be ſuppoſed they could be inattentive. *Twelve* months had elapſed ſince the three elders laſt mentioned, had reſigned their offices, and, not long afterwards, they alſo declined the attendance of meetings for

for diſcipline. The preceding marriage, in a manner contrary to the rules of the ſociety, was in contemplation; and they were fully aware, that, if this marriage ſhould be ſanctioned by their concurrence, the recommendation of the preceding national yearly meeting, "that our chriſtian diſcipline be properly "ſupported in the right line and ſpirit," would be regarded, by the monthly meeting, as an injunction to ſeparate them from memberſhip. In the caſe of one of theſe elders, it is further to be remarked, that he had recently experienced an afflicting diſpenſation of Providence, in the death of a faithful, affectionate, religiouſly diſpoſed, and tenderly beloved wife; who had herſelf, a very ſhort time before her deceaſe, paſſed through the ſame proceſs of diſownment, and for conduct ſimilar to that which had now occaſioned the diſmemberſhip of her huſband. Does not candour then require us to pauſe, and to be well aſſured, that we poſſeſs competent information, before we impute to the influence of *ſelf-deception*, or the impulſe of *wayward paſſions*, the conduct of men of upright minds, under circumſtances peculiarly favourable to ſerious and diſpaſſionate reflection?

Let it not however be ſuppoſed, that the preceding remarks, or any inferences, which are reaſonably deducible from them, are intended to juſtify the whole of the conduct and opinions, either of the elders who have juſt been mentioned, or of the ſeparatiſts generally. They were MEN, and conſequently IMPERFECT beings; ſuch alſo were thoſe who judged them; and TO ERR IS HUMAN. Of the moſt WISE and PIOUS

men whom the world has ever known, it may safely be affirmed, that some of their opinions are ERRONEOUS, and others INADEQUATE or IMPERFECT. Yet, whilst the superior attainments of such men are justly regarded by us with esteem and veneration, the effect on themselves is, that the *farther* they advance in KNOWLEDGE, the more sensible are they of their remaining IGNORANCE; and the more HUMBLE and DIFFIDENT do they daily become. They are always unwilling to PRESCRIBE or DICTATE to their fellow-creatures, for though desirous of INSTRUCTING, yet are they also fearful of MISLEADING others. From experimental conviction they well know that INFALLIBILITY belongs not to man; and that mutual FORBEARANCE, CONDESCENSION, and LOVE, best become FRAIL and ERRING mortals in their conduct towards each other.

FOURTH MONTH.

We are now arrived at the time when the national yearly meeting was again held. The important events, which had taken place since its last sitting, formed indeed a very interesting, and a very affecting comment on its former determinations; and the impressions produced by them, are recorded in the following minute:

NATIONAL YEARLY MEETING, 1802.

"The following report in writing has been received "from most of the friends appointed by the last yearly "meeting, to visit the province of ULSTER, and such "other parts of the nation, as they might find their "minds drawn to, viz.:

"That

" That, ſoon after the yearly meeting, ſeveral of " the friends under appointment, and ſome of the " women appointed by their meeting, proceeded to the " province of ULSTER, and attended the monthly, " quarterly, and moſt of the particular meetings.

" That in LEINSTER province, they attended the " monthly, and moſt of the particular meetings, " alſo the autumn quarterly meeting.

" That in MUNSTER they likewiſe made ſome " movements under that appointment, and that the " ſpring quarterly meeting for ULSTER and LEIN- " STER provinces, were attended by ſome under ſaid " nomination. They alſo paid viſits to many fami- " lies and individuals in the three provinces, as they " found their minds engaged. During theſe viſits, " they were often made ſenſible, that there was " *great occaſion* for the repreſentation made to the " yearly meeting, of *the affecting ſtate of the ſociety*; " and that there are *various cauſes of diſcouragement, " exiſting in divers parts of the nation*; but notwithſtand- " ing *this appears to be the caſe*, they are apprehenſive " that divers well diſpoſed friends, *give way too " much thereto*; and, *inſtead of making uſe of the abi- " lity afforded, ſeem too prone to ſink under the preſent " gloom*. The province of ULSTER appeared to them " particularly to require the foſtering care of the " yearly meeting; and they wiſh that friends of the " other two provinces, may feel themſelves engaged " to attend that quarterly meeting; in order that " thoſe who are *rightly bound to the maintenance of*

" good

" *good order, and ſupport of our chriſtian teſtimonies* " *there,* may be *encouraged and aſſiſted.*

" A verbal report was alſo received from a friend of " ULSTER province, whereby we are informed, that " the different inſtances of *diſorder,* mentioned at laſt " yearly meeting to have occurred there, have been *un-* " *der the care* of the monthly and quarterly meetings, " and that the rules of our diſcipline *have been in a* " *good degree carried into effect, ſo as to reach moſt or* " *all of thoſe caſes.*"

Of the verbal report from ULSTER, it may be remarked, that it chiefly relates to the events which have taken place, in that Province, during the memorable interval between the national yearly meetings of 1800 and 1801; and by referring to theſe, ſome judgment may be formed of the nature of " *the different* " *inſtances of diſorder*" which had occurred there, and alſo of what is meant by " *the rules of our diſcipline* " *having been, in a good degree, carried into effect ſo as* " *to reach moſt or all of theſe caſes.*"

And, whilſt the events of the *paſt* year are thus noticed, it is alſo important to remark in what manner the views of the ſociety, reſpecting the *future,* are expreſſed. The preceding report ſtates, that " though " there are various cauſes of diſcouragement exiſting " in divers parts of the nation, yet that divers well- " diſpoſed friends give way too much thereto, and " inſtead of making uſe of the ability afforded, ſeem

" too

" too prone to ſink under the preſent gloom." And it proceeds to recommend that a " foſtering care" may be extended to ULSTER, and that " thoſe who " are rightly bound to the maintenance of good order " and ſupport of our chriſtian teſtimonies there, may " be encouraged and aſſiſted."

ALAS, poor IRELAND! Is this the *temper, ſpirit,* and *ſyſtem* under which the church government of our ſociety in that kingdom, is *in future* to be adminiſtered; and is its *final doom thus* SEALED? Surely the memorable events which had occurred within the laſt four years; and the recollection, that theſe had been repeatedly predicted, and the ſociety emphatically warned that ſuch muſt be the neceſſary conſequence of its proceedings, afforded abundant reaſon to pauſe, before it ſhould thus recommend a perſeverence in meaſures from which ſo many lamentable conſequences had already reſulted.

WEAK, LOW, and progreſſively DECLINING, as the ſtate of the ſociety, for ſeveral preceding years, had been conſtantly repreſented;—deprived, as it now was, of the counſels and aſſiſtance of many of thoſe, who, in the ſtation of MINISTERS and ELDERS, and and in various active ſervices in the DISCIPLINE, had been as nurſing FATHERS and MOTHERS to the church;—its HOPE and SUPPORT in ſeaſons of difficulty and diſcouragement;—EXEMPLARS, to which the attention of its youth had been directed with pious and affectionate ſolicitude;—the PARTNERS of its LABOURS, and the HELPERS of its JOY;—how naturally

turally would it follow, that "divers well diſpoſed "friends ſhould indeed be ſenſibly affected by the "various cauſes of diſcouragement which had been "reported to the late national yearly meeting!" Well might they be "prone to ſink under the preſent "gloom," whilſt they reflected, either upon the events which were already paſſed—or upon thoſe which might reaſonably be expected to ſucceed. For unleſs theſe "well diſpoſed friends" are rouſed from their deſpondency, and ſhould happily ſucceed in giving a more ſalutary direction to the zeal of their active brethren, it requires not the aid of prophecy to foreſee the reſult, which, a perſeverence in ſuch meaſures, muſt neceſſarily produce.

They who are rightly bound to the "maintenance "of good order," and the "ſupport of chriſtian teſti-"monies," have indeed important duties to fulfil; and earneſtly will it be the wiſh of every ſerious and benevolent mind, that ſuch perſons may, at all times, be "encouraged and aſſiſted." It is of importance, however, to aſcertain whether the language, adopted on this occaſion, is ſtrictly applicable to that conduct which it was the object of the ſociety to recommend.

The deceivableneſs of the human heart, and the ſecret, continual workings of SELF-LOVE, frequently under circumſtances which render its agency the *leaſt-ſuſpected*, and ſometimes under the *guiſe* even of *benevolence*—are juſtly deemed powerful obſtacles to that moſt difficult, yet moſt important, of all human attainments—THE ACCURATE KNOWLEDGE OF OURSELVES.

SELVES. Hence, great circumſpection and frequent ſelf-examination are eſſential, and eſpecially for thoſe who fill the leading ſtations in ſociety, leſt, from miſtaken apprehenſions reſpecting themſelves and their duties, they become of that claſs, who have "a zeal "for God, but not according to knowledge." The prejudices of education—an undue attachment to the reputation of our ſect, or to the eſtabliſhment of our favourite ſyſtem, are motives, which, in all ages, have operated with ſuch extenſive influence, that none, but thoſe *who are jealous of themſelves*, can poſſibly expect to preſerve their minds unwarped by ſuch cauſes. The *purity of our motives*, the ſuitableneſs of our qualifications, and the *genuine nature and tendency of our conduct*, ſhould therefore be *well aſcertained*, before we engage in ſocial duties for the "maintenance of good order," and the "ſupport of chriſtian teſtimonies;" and in an eſpecial manner, under ſuch peculiar circumſtances as thoſe which we have now been relating. Without great attention to theſe conſiderations, whenever we engage in the ſervice of religion, we are in conſtant danger of *injuring* inſtead of *ſerving*, that cauſe which we *may believe ourſelves moſt deſirous of promoting*, and even of deſtroying our own peace.

It cannot be doubted, that among thoſe who have been active in the meaſures which have led to the diſownment, or voluntary ſeparation of their ſerious and conſcientious brethren and ſiſters, there are many, whoſe lives and converſation evince much that is truly reſpectable and exemplary. There is abundant reaſon to believe that this claſs includes a conſiderable number

ber who have been ſincerely deſirous of diſcharging their duty, under circumſtances, to them, peculiarly difficult and painful; and they may not have been fully aware of *all* the conſequences which the meaſures, in which they have taken part, were calculated to produce.

It is alſo poſſible, that ſome of theſe perſons, knowing that they had been appointed by the ſociety to execute its rules, in ſupport of the diſcipline, and in conformity with the recommendations of the national yearly meeting, may hence, have been too eaſily ſatisfied with their own conduct, and not ſuitably impreſſed with the importance of that ſerious inquiry into the grounds on which they were then acting, which was ſo peculiarly called for, by the new and intereſting ſituation of affairs at this time. How often, and how emphatically, have the rightly concerned miniſters among us, been engaged to impreſs upon our minds, that in all our movements for the good of our fellow creatures, it is of great importance not to act under the ſanction of mere *human appointment*; but to have a clear conviction, that the ſervice propoſed to us by our brethren in the church, is that which is required by, and will be acceptable to, God.

In whatever point of view, the events, which form the ſubjects of this narrative, may be conſidered, it will be admitted by all, that they are pregnant with inſtruction. To thoſe who have taken an active part in them, theſe events muſt frequently form the ſubjects of intereſting review; and, if any of the feelings, under

under the influence of which they have acted, or any of the impreſſions, under which their opinions have been formed, were too ſtrongly excited by the concomitant circumſtances of the day, the " lenient hand " of time," and the opportunities for ſubſequent reflection, may, it is hoped, have aſſiſted them in forming a more mature and unbiaſſed judgment. They are now enabled more fully to aſcertain the *aggregate number* and *importance* of the events which have taken place, and to judge, in what degree " *the reſtoration of* " *harmony and good order amongſt us, as a religious ſo-* " *ciety, (that ſo all may be preſerved in the unity of the* " *ſpirit, which is the bond of true peace.*" *) has been effected by the meaſures, which are reluctantly recorded in this narrative; and to compare the conſequences, hereby produced, with thoſe which might poſſibly have been the reſult, if a different ſyſtem had been acted upon.

They cannot be ſuppoſed to be ignorant of thoſe events which, eccleſiaſtical hiſtory informs us, have occurred in every religious ſociety, whenever the bulk of its members have become devoted to the world. The certain conſequence of this is, that the religious opinions of ſuch are thenceforward retained, merely as effects of education or tradition; the inclination, and even the power, to inveſtigate for themſelves, ſcarcely exiſts; the rights of private judgment and the exerciſe of individual inquiry, in others, are diſcouraged, or at leaſt regarded

* See Minute of the National Yearly Meeting, 1801, Page 139.

regarded with a jealous eye, the very grounds on which the ſociety firſt claimed a diſtinct exiſtence, become unpopular among its own members; and an appeal to thoſe principles on which it was originally founded, is regarded as a ſymptom of the dangerous ſpirit of innovation.* But the conſequence, moſt of all

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* One of the moſt important of thoſe PRINCIPLES, under the influence of which, conſcientious individuals detach themſelves from the community at large, in order to form a diſtinct religious ſociety is, "that the END for which they aſ-"ſociate, ſhall at all times be aimed at SOLELY by VIRTUOUS "MEANS." Their PRIMARY OBJECT is to aſſert and maintain important rights, or to promulgate and give effect to important truths, by which they believe their own beſt intereſts, and thoſe alſo of their fellow-creatures, are likely to be promoted. The forming and *preſerving of a ſociety* is a SECONDARY OBJECT; it is ſolely the MEANS, of which the primary object is the END. It muſt therefore follow that, to this PRIMARY OBJECT, the SECONDARY OBJECT ſhould be at all times, not merely SUBORDINATE, but SUBSERVIENT; and it is eſſential to the right conduct of every religious ſociety, that its members ſhould be impreſſed with the importance of this diſtinction. If they be ignorant of or inattentive to it, they will often be in danger, not only of, forgetting the PRIMARY OBJECT for which they were at firſt aſſociated, but even of *counteracting its attainment.* Indeed there is always reaſon to be apprehenſive of this conſequence, when the PREDOMINANT wiſh, or LEADING object of any ſociety, is to ſupport its exiſtence and reputation as a *diſtinct ſect.* Meaſures may be well adapted to the purpoſe of *keeping up a ſect, and preſerving reſpect to its rules and reputation*; and

all to be dreaded, is, that, whilſt the mind becomes thus debaſed by the god of this world, the influence of bigotry and ignorance is fatally increaſing. Unimportant forms and uneſſential tenets are inſiſted upon, as the *indiſpenſable* requiſite for memberſhip, although to the certain diminution of peace and concord; and the profeſſors of the goſpel, in their conduct towards each other, ſeem too frequently to have been unmindful of the ONLY teſt by which Jeſus Chriſt authoriſed man, *in judging of his fellow-man*, to aſcertain what it is that conſtitutes the ESSENTIAL *qualification for* TRUE DISCIPLESHIP. "BY THIS "SHALL ALL MEN KNOW THAT YE ARE MY "DISCIPLES, IF YE HAVE LOVE ONE TO ANO-"THER." John, chap. 13. v. 35.

CHILDREN OF ERIN! what have ye not ſuffered, through ſucceſſive ages, from the baneful ſpirit of enmity and diſſention; and is the cup of your afflictions not yet full? Whilſt your hiſtory records, in direful ſucceſſion, the perſecutions of Proteſtants, by Catholics—of Catholics, by Proteſtants—and of Diſſenters, by the Eſtabliſhed Church, even before the wounds, which the latter had itſelf ſuffered, were yet healed. What ſhall conſole the weeping friend of the goſpel, oppreſſed by the mingled feelings of ſhame and anguiſh, when his own teſt is held up to him

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and yet thoſe meaſures may be directly oppoſed to the genuine intereſts of *truth* and *virtue*, and the conſequent *happiness of mankind*. See an inſtance of this in the Appendix No 5.

him, by the infidel, with this inſulting taunt, "By "their fruits ye ſhall know them?"

And ſhall they, who deem themſelves the profeſſors of a purer faith; they, who believe themſelves peculiarly favoured with clear diſcoveries of the truth, as it is in Jeſus; they, on whoſe minds it has been long and ſedulouſly inculcated, that, in their firſt eſtabliſhment as a religious ſociety, they were ſet apart by the Almighty, to be "as lights to the "world," and that they have ſince continued to be the priviledged people, whom God has expreſsly choſen, to hold up the ſtandard of truth and righteouſneſs to ſurrounding nations; ſhall they be unmindful of the ſolemn declaration of their heavenly maſter, and inattentive to thoſe leſſons of inſtruction which his example, and the uniform tenor of the goſpel, ſo powerfully inculcate? Did he ſanction the eſtabliſhment of human tribunals, for the cognizance of modes, and forms, and opinions, reſpecting religion? or did he not, on the contrary, leave this ſolemn injunction; "judge not that ye be not judged; for with what "judgment ye judge, ye ſhall be judged; and, with "what meaſure ye mete, it ſhall be meaſured to you "again?" Matthew, chap. 7, v. 1, 2.

Even, on an occaſion of heinous and acknowledged immorality, inſtead of giving countenance to that reſtleſs diſpoſition to judge and condemn, by which the eccleſiaſtical zealots of thoſe days were actuated; our Lord pronounced a ſentence, which, whilſt it happily ſucceeded in convicting their conſciences of guilt

guilt for their own offences, is replete with delicate and pointed inſtruction to all ſucceeding ages. " He " that is without ſin among you, let him firſt caſt a " a ſtone at her." John, chap. 8. v. 7.

The conduct of the heavenly Meſſiah, leaves no room for doubt, that he cordially approved the obſervance of the SABBATH, as having been, with views worthy of the divine GOODNESS, ordained by the Almighty not only to be a day of reſt to HIS animal creation, but as *thereby* affording, to his RATIONAL OFFSPRING, opportunities peculiarly ſuited to the purpoſes of grateful commemoration, ſerious reflection, and religious inſtruction. Yet notwithſtanding this, when the Phariſees, who were zealous for " the letter which killeth," although ſtrangers to the influence of " the ſpirit which giveth life," preſſed our Saviour to the *ſuperſtitious obſervance* of this day, he replies to them in terms of merited reproof, " the Sabbath was made for man, and not " man for the Sabbath." Mark, chap. 2. v. 27.

How pregnant with inſtruction was his conduct, on that memorable occaſion, when JOHN came to him, ſaying, " Maſter, we ſaw one caſting out devils " in thy name, and we forbad him, BECAUSE HE " FOLLOWETH NOT WITH US. And Jeſus ſaid " unto him. Forbid him not, FOR HE THAT IS " NOT AGAINST US, IS FOR US." Luke, chap. 9, v. 49, 50. Now, if the mind, even of John, *the friend and favourite diſciple whom Jeſus loved*, was actuated with an unrighteous zeal to rebuke a brother,

ther, thus benevolently employed, and that, ſolely "*becauſe he followeth not with us,*" how much reaſon is there for the profeſſors of the goſpel, in every *ſubſequent* age, to beware, leſt a ſimilar temper ſhould induce in them, an unreaſonable deſire to ſubject the opinions, and the conduct of others, to a conformity with their own?

"Days ſhould ſpeak, and multitude of years "ſhould teach wiſdom;" Job, chap. 32, v. 7; and ſurely, to the attentive mind, their language would be both intelligible and inſtructive, on the ſubjects now before us. May it not then, *at length*, be hoped, that the period is not diſtant, when even the SECTARIAN, will become convinced that, though greatly deſirable in the *fundamentals* of religion, yet, in its *forms* and *ſubordinate opinions*, UNITY, if it be attainable at all, cannot poſſibly long ſubſiſt; and that, even if it did prevail to any conſiderable extent, it would by no means prove a bleſſing? Where is the ſociety whoſe hiſtory does not illuſtrate this remark? Let our inquiries be directed to thoſe periods, in which UNITY has been ſuppoſed to have had any ſettled and long continued exiſtence, and we ſhall diſcover, that in whatever degree this has really been the caſe, it has been the reſult, not of *zeal*, but of *ſupineneſs*; and that a *lifeleſs formality*, and *lukewarmneſs to religious truth*, are the inſeparable attendants.

Whenever men have become eminently devoted to the cauſe of truth and righteouſneſs, the ardent aſpirations of their minds, and the predominant occupation of

of their faculties have, almoſt uniformly, induced ſome *peculiar views and opinions*, reſpecting which, they have differed from each other, and from themſelves, in the earlier periods of life. Their great and conſtant concern is, that, "by giving all diligence, they may "add to their faith, virtue, and to virtue KNOWLEDGE;" 2nd Pet. chap. 1. v. 5; and as the divine bleſſing never fails to reward the upright endeavours of thoſe who are thus employed, their minds are not unfrequently enlightened and enlarged by the diſcovery of intereſting and important truths; and they are hereby animated to a perſeverence in their labours of benevolence and love. In this claſs, the late JOHN WOOLMAN, and JOB SCOTT, two members of our ſociety, not to mention many others both *within* and *without* its pale, were conſpicuous and bright examples. And though, in ſome of their views and opinions, and even in the *conduct* of the former, there was a ſtriking *peculiarity*, yet had this no tendency to *leſſen*, nay, it might perhaps be ſafely ſtated, that it even *increaſed* the ſympathy, affection, and eſteem of their brethren, to many of whom, who yet ſurvive, they were intimately known; and to theſe, their memory continues to be precious. *

* A very ſmall poſthumous tract, entitled, "a Word of "Remembrance and Caution to the Rich," by JOHN WOOLMAN; firſt printed in America, has ſince been re-printed in Dublin and London. This valuable tract is yet, however, by no means generally known, even among our own ſociety, in proportion to the great excellence and importance of its contents.

Inſtances of cordial and long cemented friendſhip, between liberal and virtuous minds, who neither hold *ſimilar opinions*, nor practice *ſimilar forms* in matters of religion, are ſufficiently frequent to ſhew, that UNITY IN FORMS and OPINIONS, is by no means eſſential to that bond of union. The nature of WISDOM and FOLLY, TRUTH and FALSEHOOD, VIRTUE and VICE, are indeed irreconcileably *oppoſed* to each other; and the neceſſary reſult is, that among their reſpective votaries, whether of the *ſame* or of *different* ſocieties, UNITY muſt be unknown. But among thoſe, who are happily habituated to regard the GLORY of GOD, and the GOOD of MANKIND, as the PREDOMINANT objects of their purſuit, is it not obvious, that there can be no DIFFERENCES about forms and opinions, reſpecting which they are likely to feel, or, *would be juſtified in feeling*, great anxiety, on behalf of each other? There is indeed ONE point, beyond all others, PRE-EMINENT in importance, concerning which their labours and their prayers, for each other, can never be unneceſſary or unſeaſonable; and this is, UNITY in that ſentiment which repreſents the FAVOUR of our merciful CREATOR, and an INCREASING PARTICIPATION of his DIVINE NATURE, through all the ſucceſſive periods of ETERNAL EXISTENCE, by means of a PROGRESSIVE IMPROVEMENT in INTELLECT and VIRTUE, as OBJECTS infinitely more MOMENTOUS than any which this world can preſent?

Were we indeed united in a practical, conſiſtent, animated, and ſtedfaſt belief in this unſpeakably important ſentiment, its genuine effect would be deeply

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to imbue our minds with the LOVE OF GOD ABOVE ALL, and of OUR NEIGHBOUR as OURSELVES. Compared with theſe TWO GREAT, and ALONE FUNDAMENTAL principles, how uneſſential, how ſubordinate, would all SECTARIAN differences of opinion appear? Arrayed in all the grace and dignity, in all the ſimplicity and lovelineſs of her native character—CHRISTIANITY would then delight to become the aſſociate of the children of men. Inſtructed by her counſels, invigorated by her conſolations, animated by the glorious proſpects to which ſhe would exalt our views—we ſhould lean upon her as our FRIEND and COMPANION along the dubious journey of life; and, like a GUARDIAN ANGEL from the immediate preſence of the ALMIGHTY, ſhe would unceaſingly point our footſteps to the regions of BLISS. The expectations inſpired by antient prophecy would thus indeed be happily fulfilled.

Then ſhall the wolf take up his abode with the lamb,
And the leopard ſhall lie down with the kid;
And the calf, and the young lion, and the fatling ſhall
come together,
And a little child ſhall lead them;
And the heifer and the ſhe-bear ſhall feed together,
Together ſhall their young ones lie down;
And the lion ſhall eat ſtraw like the ox;
And the ſuckling ſhall play upon the hole of the aſpic;
And upon the den of the baſiliſk ſhall the new-weaned
child lay his hand:
They ſhall not hurt, nor deſtroy, in all my holy mountain;

For the earth ſhall be full of the knowledge of Jehovah,
As the waters that cover the depths of the ſea. *

Surely neither this ſtate of things, nor *any near approach* to it, has *yet* taken place on the earth; and to what cauſe can we, who rely with unſhaken confidence on the truth of this prophecy, aſcribe its *long protracted* fulfilment? Is it not, *in part*, that SELF is the IDOL which the great bulk of mankind worſhip, and that their views extend not beyond the objects of time and ſenſe? And may it not be ſtated, as a *further* cauſe, that, even among thoſe who have been meaſureably acquainted with the ineſtimable value of truth and virtue, and enabled to rejoice in the contemplation

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* The preceding is quoted from Biſhop Lowth's tranſlation of Iſaiah, chap. 11. v. 6. to 9, incluſive, and the annexed is an extract from "Reflections" on this paſſage, taken from "a ſhort and plain expoſition of the Old Teſta-"ment, by Job Orton."

"How ſolicitous ſhould we be to anſwer the deſign of "his Goſpel, and to have theſe illuſtrious prophecies of its "good effects fulfilled in us! Let us make it appear that we "are chriſtians indeed, by the peaceableneſs and gentleneſs "of our diſpoſition, the ſoftneſs and ſweetneſs of our tem-"pers! let nothing malicious, revengeful, ſour, conten-"tious, or unkind, be ever found in us. Let us cultivate "peace; labour to promote each others happineſs; and in "this, *follow on to know the Lord*; and by increaſing in our "acquaintance with him, who is love, be *conformed to his* "*image*, and *walk in love*, even as Chriſt hath loved us."

plation of that immortal inheritance which is the appointed reward of theſe heavenly attainments, there are too many, who ſuffer their attention to be diverted from the ONLY means by which this rich inheritance can be fully enjoyed? Inſtead of ACTIVE and UNREMITTED EXERTIONS in the cauſe of PIETY, INTEGRITY, and BENEVOLENCE, are there not ſome of the ſerious and well-diſpoſed profeſſors of the goſpel, who fail in rightly appreciating the value of their peculiar opinions, and not only give evident proofs of a deficiency in the great virtues of BROTHERLY KINDNESS, and CHARITY, but feel an unreaſonable degree of anxiety, whenever the reputation or the prevalence of their opinions are likely to be affected by the zeal and activity of men, upright and conſcientious, like themſelves; *agreeing* with them, in all that reſpects the nature and importance of the *objects to be attained*, and *differing* only concerning ſome of the ſubordinate *opinions* or *means* for attaining them. Hiſtory, experience, and obſervation, have abundantly ſhewn, that inquiry and diſcuſſion may not only be ſafely left to their own unfettered operation, on all ſuch points, but that it is abſolutely eſſential to the beſt intereſts of mankind, that this ſhould be done; that one of the appointed teſts of CHARITY and PURE RELIGION is *hereby* brought into action; and that, by ſuch means only, will TRUTH and VIRTUE finally PREVAIL. It is by the adoption of a contrary ſyſtem, that the profeſſors of the GOSPEL of PEACE, and LOVE, and JOY, have been ſo often and ſo afflictingly diſunited and diſgraced. ALIENATION, PERSECUTION, UNCHARITABLENESS, are the natural

tural, the inevitable conſequences of that lamentable ſpirit of domination, ſectariſm, and ſtrife, which is hereby produced. Theſe are indeed deplorable "ſpots "in the chriſtian's feaſt of charity;" theſe cauſe the "weak to ſtumble, the profane to blaſpheme;" it is theſe which keenly ſharpen, cruelly barb, and fatally envenom the ſhafts of IRRELIGION and INFIDELITY.

SUPPLEMENT.

IN addition to the tranſactions recorded in the preceding Narrative, the following facts have alſo occurred:

CORRY FOWLER and JANE HAUGHTON were married, on the 13th of the 12th month, 1802, *at the houſe of her mother*, in Carlow; for, as he was not a member of the ſociety, the parties were, by its law, prevented from marrying according to the preſcribed forms. Their marriage was therefore ſolemnized in the preſence of TWELVE witneſſes, two of whom had been in the ſtation of ELDERS, and the annexed is a copy of the marriage certificate.

"There having been for ſome time paſt an intention of marriage, between CORRY FOWLER, ſon of "JOHN FOWLER, now of Cork, and ELIZABETH "his wife, and JANE HAUGHTON, daughter of "BENJAMIN HAUGHTON, late of Proſpect, in the

" county Kildare, and ABIGAIL his wife; and their " ſaid intentions being *publicly known, and conſented to* " *by their parents*, and ſeveral of their near connexions. " Now theſe are to certify all whom it may concern, " that for the full accompliſhment of their ſaid in- " tentions, this 13th day of December, 1802, in the " town of Carlow, at the houſe of Abigail Haughton, " aforeſaid, and in preſence of the undernamed per- " ſons, they the ſaid Corry Fowler, and Jane Haugh- " ton, did ſeverally and ſolemnly declare, that they " took each other for huſband and wife, and did pro- " miſe to continue faithful to each other in theſe rela- " tions until death ſhould ſeparate them. In confir- " mation whereof, they have hereunto ſubſcribed " their names as huſband and wife.

" CORRY FOWLER,
" JANE FOWLER."

" And we the ſaid undernamed perſons, aſſembled " for the purpoſe of witneſſing the above engagement, " do hereby certify, that this marriage contract was " entered into in our preſence, the day and year be- " fore written

" SAM. HAUGHTON,	" ABIGAIL HAUGHTON,
" BARC. HAUGHTON,	" MARTHA FOWLER,
" ABM. SHACKLETON,	" SAMUEL HAUGHTON,
" ELIZA SHACKLETON,	" MARY HAUGHTON,
" MARY WHITE,	" ELIZ. HAUGHTON,
" WM. BARRINGTON,	" JONAT. HAUGHTON."

For this offence againſt the rules of the diſcipline, the

the monthly meeting of Carlow publiſhed the following teſtimony of diſownment againſt Jane Fowler.*

" Jane Haughton, daughter of the late Benjamin " Haughton and Abigail his wife, who has been " educated conformable to the religious principles of " the people called Quakers, and made profeſſion " thereof, hath notwithſtanding been perſuaded ſo far " to deviate from our known rules, as to enter into " *contract by way of marriage*, with a young man not " of our religious profeſſion. Wherefore, that we may " clear the truth that we profeſs, and ſupport the " good order of our diſcipline, from the *reproach of*

* It will be obſerved, that in this, as well as in the caſe mentioned page 187, the monthly meeting continues to denominate the party by her *maiden* name, and by that only, although the diſownment took place nearly ſix months after the marriage. It appears that the active members of the ſociety have been deſirous of impreſſing the idea that connexions thus formed could not, with any propriety, be regarded as marriages And it may *seem* extraordinary that, for effecting this object, the more zealous diſciplinarians ſhould in modern times have ſtigmatized the conduct of perſons ſo marrying, by the ſame diſguſting alluſion, which WILLIAM SEWELL, in page 283 of his hiſtory, ſtates to have been " bluntly and indecently" employed, in order to diſparage the early marriages of their own anceſtors, by one of the council, at the aſſizes in Nottingham, in 1661, whilſt endeavouring, though ineffectually, to invalidate a marriage which had taken place, according to the rules of the ſociety, between two of its members.

" *ſuch miſconduct*, after much labour of love, which " hath failed to convince or prevent this *improper* " ſtep, we deem it incumbent on us to *diſown* the " ſaid Jane Haughton to be of our religious ſociety, " nor can we have *any fellowſhip with her, until by* " *ſincere repentance* ſhe be favoured to ſee the *error and* " *pernicious tendency of this her out-going*, and it is our " ſincere deſire, that hereby ſhe may find *a place of* " *reconciliation.*

" Read and approved in our monthly men's meet- " ing, held in Carlow, 10th of 6th month, 1803, and " by order, and on behalf thereof, ſigned by

" JOSHUA HAUGHTON, Clerk."

ABIGAIL HAUGHTON, a widowed parent, and one of the perſons already alluded to, as having been appointed by the ſociety to the ſtation of an elder, approved of, and was preſent as a witneſs at, the marriage of her daughter; and for this conduct ſhe was publicly diſowned, in connexion with three other members of the ſociety, of acknowledged reſpectability of character and conduct; and the following is a copy of the teſtimony againſt them.

" Our known rules, concerning the honourable in- " ſtitution of marriage, being long characterized for " their orderly and ſalutary effects, and having the " SANCTION OF LAW;* the diſregarding or violation " of

* What proportion the number of Quakers in IRELAND, bears

" of them by any in profeſſion with us, cannot fail
" painfully to impreſs our minds as a religious ſociety,
" And whereas ABIGAIL HAUGHTON, SAMUEL
" HAUGHTON, MARY HAUGHTON, his wife, and
" MARY

---

bears to the whole population of that kingdom, is perhaps not correctly known. In GREAT BRITAIN, it has been ſuppoſed, that the members of the ſociety amount to about 24,000, and that the inhabitants of the kingdom collectively, may be eſtimated at 12 millions. The government, which legiſlates for this immenſe population, has ſhewn its regard towards the ſcruples of the ſociety, with reſpect to the public eſtabliſhed forms relating to marriage, by permitting it to adopt the forms of its own choice, and by giving to theſe forms *the sanction of law*. In other words—when it is diſcovered that an eſtabliſhed law, for the general government of the empire, is found to be oppreſſive to the conſciences of a particular ſociety, whoſe number, in proportion to the whole of the ſubjects, is (according to the preceding eſtimate) in the ratio of 1 to 500, the operation of the law, ſo far as it affects the members of this ſociety, is not only ſuſpended by the government, but ſtatutes are expreſsly enacted for their relief and comfort. It might ſurely be expected, that the natural effect of this indulgence, on the part of the legiſlature, ſhould be to diſpoſe the ſociety to be equally indulgent to the ſcruples of its conſcientious members, inſtead of ſubjecting them to cenſure and diſownment; and to connect ſuch proceedings with an alluſion to the *sanction* of that *law*, by which the ſociety is *itself* protected in the exerciſe of *its peculiar scruples* concerning the forms relating to marriage, muſt injure, inſtead of ſerving, the cauſe which it is intended to ſupport.

" MARY WHITE, did violate the good order eſta-
" bliſhed amongſt us in this reſpect, particularly by
" being preſent, and giving their ſanction as PA-
" RENT, RELATIONS, AND WITNESSES, to a *contract*
" *by way of marriage*, entered into between a young
" woman, our member, and a young man not in pro-
" feſſion with us, in a manner contrary to the good
" order, and binding ſolemnity of our marriages.
" Wherefore, in ſupport of our ancient eſtabliſhed
" diſcipline, after much labour beſtowed in a ſpirit of
" love, in order to convince them of the *dangerous*
" *tendency* of ſuch proceedings, but which hath
" proved ineffectual, we are concerned to teſtify our
" diſunity with their conduct herein, and do hereby
" diſown the ſaid Abigail Haughton, Samuel Haugh-
" ton, Mary Haughton, and Mary White, to be of
" our religious ſociety, *nor can we have fellowſhip with*
" *them*, until they be favoured to ſee *the error of their*
" *ways*, and come to a ſtate of *real ſorrow and re-*
" *pentance for the ſame*, which we ſincerely deſire may
" be their happy experience.

" Read and approved in our monthly men's meet-
" ing, held in Carlow, the 6th of 5th month, 1803.
" Signed by

" JOSHUA HAUGHTON, Clerk."

For the ſame offence, ELIZABETH SHACKLE-TON, of Ballitore, has alſo been *publicly* diſowned by the monthly meeting of Carlow, in the following terms.

" Elizabeth,

" Elizabeth Shackleton, daughter of Abraham " Shackleton, who was educated in profeſſion with " friends, being regardleſs of our known rules, hath " ſo far deviated therefrom, as to be preſent as a wit- " neſs to a *contract by way of marriage*, entered into " between a young woman in memberſhip with us, " and a man not of our religious profeſſion. And in- " aſmuch as our labour of love, to convince her of the " *dangerous tendency* of her conduct, in ſanctioning " a mode that is contrary to the good order, and " binding ſolemnity of our marriages, has proved in- " effectual, we are concerned, in ſupport of our chriſ- " tian diſcipline, to *diſallow all ſuch practices*; and we " hereby diſown the ſaid Elizabeth Shackleton to be " of our religious ſociety, until ſhe manifeſt ſincere " *contrition* for this *diſorderly proceeding*, which that " ſhe may be favoured to, do is our earneſt deſire.

" Read and approved, at an adjournment of our " monthly men's meeting, held in Carlow, 6th of " 5th month, 1803, and in, by order, and on behalf " thereof, ſigned in the abſence of the clerk, by

" William Lecky."

Abraham Shackleton, and William Barrington, two of the other witneſſes, had been previouſly diſowned, and the reſt were either minors, or not members of the ſociety.

Fourteen members belonging to the monthly meeting of Lurgan, have been diſowned by the following minute.

Minute

Minute of the monthly meeting, held in Lurgan, 17th of 9th month, 1803.

" The committee, to whoſe care it was referred, " to treat with JOHN DAVIS and others, on the ſub- " ject of their abſenting themſelves from our religious " aſſemblies, having reported, that they viſited as " many as were willing to receive them, and, in " much brotherly kindneſs, endeavoured to convince " them of the impropriety of their conduct. And " this meeting, having exerciſed a long patience to- " wards them, without being able to prevail on them " to unite with their friends, for the purpoſe of per- " forming the reaſonable duty of public worſhip, and " being at this time impreſſed with the importance of " the ſubject, and the neceſſity of ſupporting the " rules of the diſcipline in that reſpect with impar- " tiality and ſteadineſs, think it right to teſtify our " diſapprobation of their conduct, and diſown them " to be any longer of our religious ſociety, ſincerely " deſiring they may yet be reſtored to that principle " of our chriſtian profeſſion, which enjoins us not to " neglect the aſſembling of ourſelves together.

" The clerk is deſired to furniſh each with a copy " of the above minute."

" As clerk to the monthly meeting, I am deſired " to hand thee the above copy of a minute from their " proceedings, and remain thy friend,

" JOS. GOUGH,"

*To John Davis, Moyallen.**

A copy

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* John Davis had been in the ſtation of an appointed elder.

A copy of the preceding minute, with a variation only of the name, was tranſmitted by the clerk to the following perſons.

JOHN GREEVES,	DEBORAH SINTON,
MARGARET GREEVES,	THOMAS MATTHEWS,
JOHN GILMORE,	THOMAS UPRICHARD,
MARGARET DAWSON,	RUTH UPRICHARD,
SAMUEL MORTON,	JAMES WOODS,
SAMUEL ADAMS,	AND
ELIZABETH ADAMS,	BENJ. THOMPSON.*

The charge ſtated, againſt the perſons, diſowned by the preceding minute, "of abſenting themſelves from "our religious aſſemblies," was admitted to be juſt; yet it would probably be unfair, on this account, to impute to them any abatement in their attachment to the duties of religion. Moſt, if not all of them, had for a conſiderable time, been greatly diſſatisfied with the conduct both of the ſociety, and of ſome of its acknowledged miniſters. Conceiving alſo, that the exerciſe of private judgment had been, and was intended to be, diſcouraged, they believed it right for them to manifeſt their diſunity with ſuch proceedings. They were fully aware that, according to the rules of the ſociety, their conduct would ſubject them to diſownment, and this conſequence they had no wiſh to oppoſe.

The

* Benjamin Thompſon had, by a letter addreſſed to the monthly meeting of Liſburn, as ſtated page 184, voluntarily reſigned membership, about eighteen months previous to his diſownment.

The following diſownments have taken place in the monthly meeting of Liſburn.

Minute of the monthly meeting of Liſburn, held near Ballinderry, the 13th of 10th month, 1803.

" The committee appointed to viſit ſuch members " as had abſented themſelves from meetings of wor- " ſhip and diſcipline, report, that they had viſited " ſundry perſons of this deſcription; among whom " the following was treated with, viz. ELIZABETH " THOMPSON, of Belfaſt meeting. She did not give " the committee any ground to expect that ſhe would " in future unite with friends in publicly aſſembling " for worſhip, or for the maintenance of that order " eſtabliſhed among them; ſhe alſo expreſſed herſelf " ſatisfied with whatever ſteps friends might take on " this occaſion.

" This meeting, having maturely conſidered this " report, are of the judgment that they cannot " any longer conſider the ſaid Elizabeth Thompſon " as in membership with us; and we do hereby diſ- " own her, the ſaid Elizabeth, and this conduct of " hers, as altogether inconſiſtent with the practice and " profeſſion of friends, ſince they were firſt gathered " as a religious ſociety.

By order of the ſaid meeting,

(Copy) " Signed, JOHN BARCROFT."

The copy of a minute, which, in ſubſtance, exactly reſembles the preceding, has alſo been ſent to WILLIAM

WILLIAM TUCKER, of Belfaſt, and HENRY CARLETON, jun. of Hillſborough.

LYDIA, wife of JAMES NICHOLSON, of Belfaſt, ELIZABETH HANCOCK, ſen. SARAH HANCOCK, and JOHN HANCOCK, jun. of Liſburn, have been reſpectively viſited by direction of the monthly meeting of Liſburn, for declining the attendance of meetings for worſhip. In the caſe of Elizabeth Hancock, ſen. however, the proceedings have been terminated by her deceaſe, which took place on the third of the ſecond month, 1804.

APPENDIX.

APPENDIX.

No. I. Page 24.

Brief account of the queries framed for meetings of diſcipline in the ſociety, and of the alterations and improvements which have been progreſſively made therein.

PREVIOUSLY to the inſtitution of any queries for meetings of diſcipline, the following recommendations were iſſued by the yearly meeting, held in London, in 1676.

"Agreed, that friends of the monthly and quar-
"terly meetings, of each county, be reminded to keep
"an exact account among themſelves;

"I. Of thoſe that firſt brought the meſſage of glad
"tidings among them.

"II. Of

" II. Of the ſufferings of thoſe firſt meſſengers, " whether at ſteeple-houſes, market-places, or other- " wiſe.

" III. What friends firſt received them and their " meſſage?

" IV. Of the names, travels, faithfulneſs, and un- " blameable converſation of all the public labourers " that are deceaſed.

" V. What judgments fell upon perſecutors?

" VI. Where the hearts of all ſuch enemies have " been turned to God, let them and their converſation " be recorded.

" VII. What prieſts and others have written books " againſt friends, and who have anſwered them?

" VIII. Who have ſuffered loſs of goods, or ſus- " tained impriſonment, with the cauſe, time, and " manner of ſuch ſufferings, with the names of their " perſecutors.

" IX. Who have died in priſon on truth's account, " and for what branch of our teſtimony. And that " tythes taken away by force, be recorded as a ſuffering " for truth.

" X. Of ſignal living teſtimonies of dying friends.

" XI. Of

" XI. Of the names of perſecutors, and the names of " witneſſes to the facts, whether friends or neighbours.

" XII. If any apoſtatized, that their ſufferings whilſt " owning the truth be notwithſtanding recorded, and " their apoſtacy's ſignified.

" XIII. Of the return of any backſliders or apos- " tates, and of the judgments befallen any of them.

" And, that in ſending the accounts of theſe mat- " ters, and of ſufferings, up to London, care be taken to " begin where they left off laſt, and not to ſend the " ſame twice over, nor confuſedly."

The queries firſt in uſe were framed by the yearly meeting, held in London, in 1682, and they were then THREE in number, viz.

" I. What friends in the miniſtry, in their respec- " tive counties, departed this life ſince the laſt yearly " meeting?

" II. What friends, impriſoned for their teſtimony, " have died ſince laſt yearly meeting.

" III. How the truth has proſpered amongſt them " ſince laſt yearly meeting, and how friends are in " peace and unity?"

In 1696 the preceding queries were altered, and the number increaſed to EIGHT, viz.

" I. What

" I. What ſufferings?

" II. What preſent priſoners?

" III. How many diſcharged, and when?

" IV. How many died priſoners, and the time " when?

" V. How many public friends died, and when?

" VI. How many meeting houſes built, and what " meetings added in each county, ſince laſt year?

" VII. What ſignal judgments have come upon " perſecutors?

" VIII. How truth proſpers, and friends are in " unity in the reſpective counties?"

The ſubſtance of the 7th query had been recommended by the following written advice from the yearly meeting in 1694.

" Adviſed to remember to keep a true record of " manifeſt judgments upon perſecutors, and ſend " up an account thereof with the ſufferings yearly; " that the juſt judgments of God in pleading the " cauſe of the innocent ſufferers, by ſignally puniſhing " their perſecutors, may be taken notice of, as a warn- " ing to poſterity; as the heavy judgments and fear- " ful

" ful ends of wicked perſecutors are recorded in holy " ſcriptures and books of martyrs. "

In 1701 it was directed that the 7th query be now ſuſpended.—" Seeing that through the good providence " of God, and favor of government, we have our li- " berties.

In 1700 it was adviſed,

" That friends keep exact and true accounts of all " their ſufferings for conſcience ſake, both by diſtreſſes, " ſequeſtrations, and impriſonments, that we may be " capable to give a true account thereof to the govern- " ment, when neceſſity requires."

This advice has now been complied with for upwards of a century, and in conſequence thereof the ſociety is in poſſeſſion of a tolerably correct and authentic record of the property taken from its members, during that period, for *eccleſiaſtical* and *military* claims, with which they could not conſcientiouſly comply. It appears that, the principal object intended by theſe records, has been to collect a body of evidence to be preſented to the " government when neceſſity re- " quires," for the purpoſe of obtaining relief from thoſe claims. Hitherto, however, there appears no great probability of their becoming ſubſervient to the attainment of this object.

In 1703 this query was inſtituted,

" How have the ſeveral advices of this meeting " been put in practice ?

And in 1721 the following addition was made;— "*and particularly that againſt receiving or paying tithes?*"

Previouſly to the year 1710 the care and relief of the POOR within the ſociety, by its own members, had been recommended as matter of ADVICE. In that year RULES, reſpecting REMOVALS and SETTLEMENTS, were firſt eſtabliſhed, in order that it might be thenceforwards clearly aſcertained to what particular diſtrict-meeting each member of the ſociety belonged, and by which, if in neceſſitous circumſtances, he ought to be relieved.

In 1720 a query was inſtituted for the purpoſe of rendering the care of the ſociety more effectual on behalf of its poor; and in 1735 an addition was made, extending this care to *the education of their offſpring*.

In 1737 the rules reſpecting REMOVALS and SETTLEMENTS were digeſted and conſiderably enlarged; all former rules on the ſubject were reſcinded; and the regulations, then adopted, with ſome ſubſequent modifications, have continued to be acted upon untill the year 1801, when theſe rules were again digeſted and incorporated.

In 1723 the following query was inſtituted; "Do "your quarterly, and monthly meetings, take care "to ſee that none under our profeſſion defraud the "King of any of his *cuſtoms, duties*, or *exciſe*; or in "any wiſe encourage the running of goods, by buying "or vending ſuch goods; and do they ſeverely repre-

"hend

" hend and teſtify againſt all ſuch offenders, and their " unwarrantable, clandeſtine, and unlawful actions?"

Variations in the queries, and occaſional additions to them, were made till the year 1742, when they were reviſed by the direction of the yearly meeting, held in London, and the ſubſtance of them was framed into eleven queries, which were then denominated *yearly meeting's queries*. Theſe compriſed the ſubject-matter of the queries already ſtated, and alſo the following.

" VI. What is the ſtate of your meeting? Is there " any growth in the *truth?* And doth any *convincement* " appear ſince laſt year? And is *love* and *unity* pre- " ſerved amongſt you?

" VII. Is it your care by example and precept, to " train up your children in all godly converſation, and " in the frequent reading of the *holy ſcriptures*, as alſo " in plainneſs of *ſpeech*, *behaviours*, and *apparel?*

" VIII. Do you bear a faithful and chriſtian teſti- " mony againſt the receiving and paying *tythes*, and " againſt bearing arms. * And do you admoniſh ſuch " as are unfaithful therein?

* By a ſubſequent regulation in 1758, the being in any manner concerned in privateers, letters of marque, or armed veſſels, or dealing in prize goods, was prohibited: and in 1761, this prohibition was extended to the militia.

" XI. Do you keep a record in your monthly and " quarterly meetings, of the profecutions and fufferings " of your refpective members? And have you a record " for your meeting houfes and burial grounds?"

In 1755, a diftinct lift of nine queries was framed by the yearly meeting, to be anfwered only by the monthly to the quarterly meetings: and thefe were denominated *quarterly meeting's queries*. The eleven yearly meeting's queries, and the nine quarterly meeting's queries, thus arranged, continued with few alterations until 1791, when all the queries, then in ufe, were new-modelled and arranged, by the direction of the yearly meeting, held in London, under the following heads.

Fifteen queries for the men's meeting of difcipline.

Nine ditto for the womens' meeting of difcipline, being in fubftance nearly the fame as a fimilar number of the queries for the men.

One query for the quarterly meetings only.

Seven queries for the meetings of minifters and elders.

Eight topics, or fubjects, of general advice.

Twelve topics, or fubjects, of advice to minifters and elders.* The

* Thefe queries are publifhed in extracts from the minutes

The queries firſt uſed in IRELAND, being twenty-one in number, were adopted by the national half-year's meeting of that kingdom in 1740. In 1755, they underwent some modification. In 1762, they were reviſed and new-modelled, chiefly upon the plan of thoſe which had been previouſly adopted in Great Britain. In conſequence of this, they conſiſted of

Eleven yearly meeting's queries.

Eleven quarterly meeting's queries.

Five monthly meeting's queries.

Theſe continued till the year 1791, when the arrangement tranſmitted from England was adopted, as ſtated in the preceding narrative; (see page 24) and this is ſtill preſerved both in Great Britain and Ireland.

By theſe changes, ſeveral of thoſe ſubjects which had previouſly formed part of the queries, uſed in Ireland, were no longer continued as ſuch. The following are ſome of the inſtances.

Of the twenty-one queries juſt alluded to,

" I. And is care taken that no unfit perſon * ſit in the

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nutes and advices of the yearly meeting of friends, held in London, under the head queries. No. II. page 142. 2nd. edition.

* It ſeems to have been a prevalent opinion in the ſociety, founded,

" the latter?" *meaning meetings of diſcipline.*

" II. Do the large meetings aſſiſt and ſtrengthen " little meetings that are near them?

" IV. Do friends avoid ſuperfluous proviſions at " marriages and burials?

" VII. Do friends avoid incumbrances, hindering " their growth in the truth and the ſervice of it?

" X. Are friend's children put to ſchool among " friends, and are the ſchools of friends duly inſpected?*

" XII. Doth

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founded, perhaps, more on the general practice, than on the exiſtence of any eſtabliſhed rule, that when any member acts in oppoſition to the laws of the ſociety, and the delinquency of ſuch member is recorded upon its journals, it is thenceforth improper for him to be preſent in any of its meetings for diſcipline, even during the diſcuſſion of his own caſe.

Previouſly to the year 1762, *young* perſons were not permitted to ſit in meetings of diſcipline in Ireland, without the ſpecial leave, or invitation, of the meeting; and a ſimilar idea has alſo prevailed in Great Britain, within the memory of the exiſting generation. In later time however there has been no ſuch reſtriction upon any who have a birthright in the ſociety.

* This relates to the care which the ſociety in Ireland was deſirous ſhould be exerciſed over the ſchools kept by its members, in order that the religious improvement of the ſcholars

" XII. Doth each monthly meeting take care that " a *viſit to the families of friends*, be performed by well " qualified friends, *once a year* or *oftener*, as occaſion " requires?

" XIII. Do friends *acquaint particular, or monthly* " *meetings, and take their advice before they remove from* " *their place of ſettlement?**

" XV. Do

ſcholars might be duly kept in view. For this purpoſe it appears to have been intended that they ſhould be inſpected, under the direction of the monthly meeting, within the limits of which each ſchool was ſituated.

Of later time a ſchool has been eſtabliſhed in each of the three provinces of Ulſter, Leinſter, and Munſter. The ſchools of Leinſter and Munſter are ſupported by the quarterly meetings to which they reſpectively belong. The ſchool belonging to Ulſter is under the care of the national yearly meeting, which contributes part of the funds neceſſary for its ſupport. Each of theſe ſchools is aſſiſted by annual ſubſcriptions, donations, and legacies; and have been inſtituted with views very ſimilar to thoſe which led to the eſtabliſhment of the large ſchool belonging to the ſociety, at Ackworth, in Yorkſhire. The price of admiſſion is low, in order to ſuit the circumſtances of the poor and middle claſſes of the ſociety. None but members of the ſociety are admitted to theſe ſchools, at each of which from thirty to ſixty boys and girls are boarded and educated.

* A ſimilar object was intended by the following, being the firſt of the " Rules for removals and ſettlements agreed to " and iſſued by the national half-year's meeting of Ireland, " fifth month, 1755.

" I. If

" XV. Do any purpoſe marriage without firſt ob-
" taining the conſent of parents and guardians?

" XXI. Is care taken by each monthly meeting
" that no miſuſe be made of the affirmation?"*

See

" If any friend, or friends, do incline to remove from the
" compaſs of one monthly or men's meeting to another;
" before they unſettle themſelves, they ſhall apply to be ad-
" viſed therein by the meeting they are about to remove from;
" and if the ſaid meeting do conſent to their removal, they
" are to give them a certificate ſpeedily, according as they
" find them deſerving, and none to be accepted without a
" certificate."

The preceding query and rule have long ceaſed to produce any practical effect in the ſociety, and may now be regarded as obſolete. By ſome it may be deemed that ſuch an aſſumption of power, on the part of the church, muſt ſometimes interfere with the rights of private judgment; and that, unleſs it were exerciſed with great wiſdom and virtue, it would be liable to abuſe. It probably would not comport with the genius of modern times in any religious ſociety; but there is reaſon to believe that the original object was to diſcourage perſons from injudiciouſly changing their reſidence, and thereby ſubjecting themſelves to inconveniencies, which the advice of their more experienced and intelligent friends might have prevented. A ſimilar regulation was formerly adopted by the ſociety in ſome parts of England.

* This query was intended to guard againſt the uſe of the affirmation, in vexatious and trifling ſuits of law, or upon occaſions, the nature and importance of which might not be ſufficient to juſtify the reſorting to a ſolemn affirmation. Alſo,

The whole of the twenty-one queries, of which the preceding are part, are publiſhed in a hiſtory of the riſe and progreſs of the people called quakers, in Ireland, by THOMAS WIGHT, page 323.

The following quarterly meeting queries, inſtituted in 1762, are now diſuſed.

" VIII. Do friends of low circumſtances put out " their children, as apprentices, or ſervants? And are " apprentices, or ſervants, placed out among friends?

" XIII. Have all friends ſettled their affairs by will " or otherwiſe? And do executors and guardians faith- " fully diſcharge the truſt repoſed in them?

The following monthly meeting query is now diſuſed.

" IV. Do any friends want ſervants, or ſervants places?"

Previouſly

Alſo, to induce great care that affirmations ſhould always be taken with ſincerity and truth, in order to ſhow to government the gratitude of the ſociety, and to juſtify the confidence repoſed in it by the former, in permiting an affirmation to be received in evidence, inſtead of an oath, except in criminal caſes, ſerving on juries, or bearing any office, or place of profit, under the government.

See alſo, " An epiſtle of caution to friends in general, rela- " ting to the ſolemn affirmation, from a meeting held in " London, the 2nd. of the firſt month, January, 1721-2." *History of the people called Quakers, by John Gough, vol.* iv. *page* 191.

Previously to the year 1783, it was the practice of the yearly meeting held in London, to transmit to the several quarterly, and through them to each of the monthly meetings, written copies of such alterations in, or additions to, the queries, rules, and advices, as were, from time to time issued. Each meeting was generally provided with a book, into which it was directed, that these alterations and additions should be copied; and this still continues to be the practice in Ireland.

From this practice, however, two inconveniencies were found to result:

One was, that the alterations in, or additions to, the queries, rules and advices, which were from time to time issued, were not always regularly and accurately copied into the book belonging to each meeting

Another inconvenience was, that these written records, were not sufficiently accessible to the members of the society generally; and in consequence thereof, the particular provisions and constitutions of the discipline were not so extensively known, as the design in issuing them, and their connexion with the relative duties of its members seemed to require.

To remedy these inconveniencies, so far as related to Great Britain, a collection of "extracts from the "minutes and advices of the yearly meeting of "friends held in London," was published in 1783. A copy was sent to each quarterly, monthly, and particular

ticular meeting; and any member of the ſociety was afterwards permitted to purchaſe this publication. Subſequent alterations and additions being repeatedly made, a new edition of the work was publiſhed in 1802.

The publiſhing of the extracts from the minutes and advices, and thereby enabling every individual member to read them in his own cloſet, may be regarded as evincing a liberal and active deſire, on the part of the ſociety, for the information and improvement of its members. It muſt have been a work of conſiderable labour and attention, to take up the records for upwards of a century, and to reviſe, ſelect, abridge, alter, and digeſt, for the purpoſe of exhibiting ſuch a collection of rules and advices, as might be applicable to the preſent times. This work was firſt undertaken principally by members of the ſociety who reſided in London, and they were afterwards aſſiſted by a conſiderable number from the ſeveral counties, who went thither for this purpoſe. The cordial zeal and unanimity which appeared among the perſons employed in preparing this publication for the preſs, were highly honourable to the character of the ſociety, as a chriſtian church; and it may be remarked, as a circumſtance probably not leſs ſingular than important, that on this, as well as all other occaſions, the deliberations of its members, in their meetings for diſcipline, are never decided by vote. Diverſity of opinion not unfrequently exiſts; but, after a ſuitable time has been allowed for diſcuſſion, the clerk endeavours to collect the prevalent ſenſe or judgment

ment of the members preſent; and this is done, generally to their ſatisfaction. It may be further remarked, that the frequent alterations which, from the preceding brief hiſtory of the queries, it will appear that they have, from time to time, undergone, evince a deſire for the progreſſive improvement of the rules and regulations of the ſociety, and that they may be conſtantly adapted to the exiſting circumſtances of the times. And although the preceding narrative will probably be regarded as furniſhing exceptions to this remark, yet even theſe may be productive of profitable effects, if they become the occaſion of impreſſing upon the ſociety the great importance of guarding againſt the two evils by which religious ſocieties have been often injured, and from one or the other of which they are always in danger, viz. a ſlaviſh adherence to preſcription, on the one hand; and an indiſcreet fondneſs for innovation, on the other.

No. II. Page 51.

QUERIES propoſed by SAMUEL WOODCOCK, an appointed ELDER of a county Wexford monthly meeting; and ANSWERS to them by ABRAHAM SHACKLETON, an appointed ELDER of Carlow monthly meeting.

"QUERY I. Did not the Almighty command his "choſen people, the children of Iſrael, for wiſe pur- "poſes, to do things which it would not be lawful for "us

" us to do, in this goſpel day; ſuch as executing his " wrath and juſtice on the inhabitants of Canaan, when " the meaſure of their iniquity was filled up? If this " was not the caſe, did not Saul act a humane part in " ſparing Agag's life, and the prophet Samuel do wrong " in hewing him to pieces?

" ANSWER.—Abraham Shackleton, in replying, " acknowledges to feel the awfulneſs of his ſituation, " called (as he is) to ſpeak for truth, which he believes " himſelf bound to do, to the beſt of his knowledge " and capacity.

" I believe the Almighty never commanded, at any " time of the world, any thing which he forbade at " any other time; which would be contradictory and " unſuitable to his character, who thus declares of " himſelf, "I am God, and change not." I do not " believe the Iſraelites were any more his choſen peo- " ple, than the Canaanites were, whom they came to " murder and deſtroy. I believe the family and poſ- " terity of Abraham were called to exhibit a perfect " pattern of holines and purity to the nations around, " in order that they (the nations) might be ſaved, not " deſtroyed; and therefore (ſtrictly ſpeaking) theſe " nations of Canaanites, &c. were (more) the choſen " people, ſeeing that the whole ſcheme of divine " goodneſs was for their recovery from their lapſed " ſtate; and theſe wiſe purpoſes which the good God " had in view, the bleſſed Jeſus afterwards adopts in " his acknowledgement, where he ſays, 'I came not " to deſtroy men's lives, but to ſave them.' I believe it " incompatible

" incompatible with that character of juſtice, which my " queriſt gives to the divine being, that men, women, " and children, ſhould be ſlain, with promiſcuous ſlaugh- " ter, for puniſhment of the offending nations. To re- " preſent the divine wrath (as he is pleaſed to call it) " riſing ſo high, as to overwhelm the SUPERIOR attribute " of JUSTICE, amounts, in my idea, to little ſhort of " blaſphemy; at leaſt, is lowering the ſtandard of the " ſovereign attribute, to accommodate the angry and " vindictive paſſions of man. I do not heſitate there- " fore to anſwer the latter part of the query; Saul " acted a humane part in ſparing Agag's life, and " Samuel did wrong in hewing him to pieces."

" QUERY II. Are we warranted, from any thing " expreſsed by Chriſt, or his appoſtles, to call in queſ- " tion any of the commands of God, left on record in " the books written by Moſes, or in any other books " of the old teſtament, notwithſtanding we are now " under a more glorious diſpenſation? If we do ſo, " are we not wiſe, above what is written, and conſe- " quently arraign the acts of him, whoſe ways were " ever in infinite wiſdom, and often incomprehenſible " by man?"

" ANSWER—My queriſt here makes his uſual miſ- " take; confounding what was really committed to the " Iſraelites as the revealed will of the divine Being, " with what was the conduct of the Jews and their " outward leaders; who, as can be proved from num- " berleſs paſſages, acted not in his counſel; but took

" counſel

" counſel of their* own avaricious ſanguinary diſpoſi-
" tion, and whenever they could, (fairly, or unfairly)
" forced in the divine command to maſk their cruel
" proceedings. For inſtance, the divine revealed
" will ſays, ' thou ſhalt not kill,' but they took up the
" murderous weapons, ſeverely reprehended by Jacob,
" in his ſons Simeon and Levi, which the Almighty
" himſelf, in earlier times, forbade in the caſe of
" Cain, who, of all men deſerved the puniſhment of
" death, if puniſhment were proportioned to the atrocity
" of guilt; this I hope our advocates for divine juſ-
" tice, clothed with wrath and vengeance, will allow.
" Chriſt charges the Jews with making void the com-
" mands of God by their traditions; their ſanguinary
" proceedings ſtill more contributed to this; and
" againſt theſe, did not Chriſt oppoſe the weight of his
" patient meek example, which gave ſo much offence
" to the Jews, that they were ever ready to ſtone
" him. The law, given by Moſes, has ſerved, in every
" age and every nation, to bring unto Chriſt; but
" neither outward Moſes, nor outward Chriſt is here
" deſignated; and grace and truth, which come by
" Jeſus Chriſt, have ſhone on every age, every nation,
" every clime under heaven, as univerſal as the light
" of day. The latter part, of ' being wiſe above
" what is written,' is one of thoſe abſtruſe expreſſions
" uſed to convey a myſtery, and has ſerved as a cover
" for obſcurity and ignorance. The wickedneſs and
" ignorance of the Jews, have given birth to many
" ſolemn trifles, as ſacrifices and ſhews, which the
" pious

* Vitioſa libido—fecerit auſpicium.

" pious credulity of after ages has puzzled itſelf in " vain to account for."

" QUERY III.—Notwithſtanding it be admitted, " there may be ſome ſmall errors, not only in the " tranſlations, but probably in ſome of the tranſcripts " of the Old Teſtament, are we thereby warranted " to doubt the truth of the accounts therein con- " tained; or that they are not a true record of the " principal tranſactions of the Lord's people in former " ages? If not, is it not reaſonable to believe our " bleſſed Lord and Saviour, when on earth would " have teſtified againſt them?"

" ANSWER—I believe there are ſome errors in " the tranſlations, more errors in the tranſcribing, " but moſt of all in the original writing; which, " coming through men ſtrongly tinctured with rab- " binical myſteries and abſurdities, they were induced " to muddy the fountain, to accommodate their dark- " ened ideas. Now ſeeing that men have written, " men have tranſcribed, and men have tranſlated theſe " writings, it is conſiſtent with the excellence and " dignity of truth, that they be perpetually ſubjected " to the ſtandard of incorruptible light, and the mani- " feſtations made thereby in the enlightened under- " ſtandings of men, whereby theſe errors are detected: " for it ſeems not conſiſtent with the wiſdom and good- " neſs of God, to ſubject the happineſs of man to the " chance of conjecture, or to the ipſe-dixit of any one " pretending to a divine revelation. Any thing there- " fore on record, which, ſubjected to this teſt, cannot

" ſtand

" ſtand the ſcrutiny, or has not an evidence in the " correct illuminated mind, is not an indiſpenſable " object of faith."

" QUERY IV.—If we are warranted to call in queſ- " tion the truth of ſome of the principal occurrences, " recorded in the old teſtament, ſuch as Elijah ſlaying " the prophets of Baal, David's killing Goliah, the " Iſraelites borrowing of their neighbours the Egyp- " tians, by the Lord's command and approbation, with " many other accounts of ſimilar nature, ſhould we not " have a ſufficient ground to doubt the truth of the " whole Bible, and lay it aſide, as a very falſe and dan- " gerous book ?"

" ANSWER—It is one thing to doubt of theſe " things being done, and another thing to doubt of the " divine authority to do them. The firſt is granted, the " latter is doubted. That they *believed themſelves* au- " thorized to perform theſe exploits may even be " allowed, but that they really were authorized I deny. " I believe that the Jews went early into the apoſtacy, " proceeding againſt the divine mind, according to the " impulſe of their blind paſſions; the deity ſuffering " them thus to work out their own puniſhment. I be- " lieve the tranſactions recorded of Elijah, David, &c. " were not commanded, as agreeable to the divine " mind, which, to aſſert, is bringing an imputation " againſt the divine character, who hereby is made to " countenance cruelty, treachery, and fraud. How " incompatible with the character which good old

" Abraham draws, when he expoſtulates—" Will not " the judge of all the earth do right?" Gen. xviii. 25."

" QUERY V.—If the ſcriptures are ſo exceedingly " corrupted, and the truth of the accounts therein con- " tained ſo much to be doubted, muſt not thoſe whom " ſome of us eſteem to have been faithful followers of " Chriſt, ſuch as George Fox, Robert Barclay, and " many others, have been influenced by the ſpirit of " errour in entitling them holy ſcriptures? And the " yearly meeting of London, very wrong in ſo fre- " quently and earneſtly recommending them to the " peruſal of friends, without pointing out to us what " parts of them were falſe and not fit to be read." " Read yearly epiſtles, 1728, &c. &c."

" ANSWER—Scriptures are of two ſorts, one is " matter of faith, whoſe truths are of everlaſting " obligation; theſe truths are revealed in the heart " of every man for his guidance, the ſcriptures bear- " ing witneſs thereto, and ſerving as collateral evi- " dence, ſhewing the uniformity, univerſality and per- " petuity of the divine communication: this is the " DOCTRINAL part. The other is HISTORICAL, " teaching alſo by a ſort of figure, or allegory: but of " the literal and hiſtorical acceptation, we have as " good a right to queſtion, as of the truth of any " other hiſtory, ſtanding upon its probability, or the " degree of clearneſs of its evidence. Again, ſome " hiſtories are profitable, others unprofitable to be " read: if any hiſtory contains matter which ſhocks " the feelings of humanity; which defies credibility,

" and

" and derogates from the divine character in the ge-
" neral ſcope of his economy, or divine ordering of his
" family of the human ſpecies, if that hiſtory were
" ſupported by all the patriarchs, and prophets, and
" Jewiſh councils, by popes, conclaves, or yearly
" meetings, yet wanted the marks and charac-
" ters which I believe to be indicative of truth,
" I reject this hiſtory, I conſider it unworthy my no-
" tice, and unſuitable to occupy my mind, or my
" time in reading it.

" QUERY VI.—When our primitive friends were
" accuſed by their adverſaries with denying the ſcrip-
" tures, becauſe they very properly aſſerted, that they
" were not the word of God, and conſequently not
" the primary rule to believers, whether are we to
" ſuppoſe they were in earneſt, or only equivocated,
" when they openly declared that they highly valued
" the ſcriptures, calling them THE HOLY SCRIP-
" TURES, and SCRIPTURES OF TRUTH, and pro-
" feſſed to find no fault with them, only ſome poſſible
" inaccuracies in tranſcripts and tranſlations, but no-
" thing ſufficient to invalidate their authority, as to
" the relation of facts and occurrences? And have
" we not, as a people, ever held forth to the world,
" that the ſpirit is the only infallible guide, and the
" ſcriptures the beſt ſecondary rule of faith and man-
" ners?

" ANSWER—The ſubſtantial part of a Chriſtian's
" belief is intimately revealed, and ſtands in no need
" of ſcripture proof, which our primitive friends early

" aſſerting, they were taxed with diſcrediting the " ſcriptures, and very juſtly, becauſe they wiſhed to " let them down to their proper ſtandard of elevation, " from the extravagant eſtimation they were held in. " Yet, finding, in that maſs of impurity, ſomething " that might ſerve as a common meaſure or ſtandard " between them and their adverſaries, they afterwards " magnified them too high; as, when we would " ſtraighten a crooked ſtaff, we bend it as much the " contrary way. The ſcriptures are (like the law " which they hold forth) ſubject to change and paſs " away. The law had its day; afterwards fault was " found with it; ſo ſhall it be with theſe writings; " they ſhall periſh, but the word, which our primi- " tive friends held forth, it remaineth. Strange! " that their poſterity, profeſſing the ſame primary " rule, ſhould reſt ſo much on Jewiſh fables, which " Paul warns Timothy againſt, and ſtill more ſtrictly " Titus, in *ch.* i. *v.* 14, that the Cretans who, like us, " were of heathen ſtock, ſhould not be turned from " the truth, following fables and commandments of " men, but come to be eſtabliſhed in the faith, at " the fountain head of inſtruction in their own minds.

" QUERY VII.—Is it not reaſonable to conclude, " that to abridge the ſcriptures, would be a tacit de- " claration that the parts left out are either falſe, or " dangerous to be read? And would not this tend to " derogate from the authority of the whole, by mak- " ing them all ſuſpicious, and thereby ſtrengthen " the hands of thoſe who are endeavouring, with all " their might, to undermine the Chriſtian religion in " this

" this generation? Would not any ſtep, likely to be
" attended with ſuch a conſequence, be highly dan-
" gerous?

" ANSWER—Theſe arguments ill ſuit a Quaker.
" If the Bible were the chief corner ſtone, it might
" be very unſafe to meddle with it; but the founda-
" tion of God ſtandeth ſure, and the gates of hell
" ſhall not prevail againſt it. My queriſt is improperly
" alarmed. Truth never refuſed the hammer; the
" more it is ſtruck, the more ſparks of divine illumi-
" nation iſſue from it. It will bear the ſtricteſt exa-
" mination. As it is LIGHT, it is vain to expect that
" its divine myſteries can remain enveloped in DARK-
" NESS. The ſcriptures reſemble the cloud, which
" at once owes its exiſtence to the ſun, and conceals
" him from our eyes; but the ſtronger influence of
" his rays diſpel the cloud, and diſplays his all-
" cheering viſage in unclouded power and beauty.

" QUERY VIII.—What reaſon have we to believe,
" that the holy ſcriptures, which Paul alluded to, in
" writing to Timothy, did not include the books we
" call the Old Teſtament, notwithſtanding there
" might have been others then extant? And what
" exceptions did Paul make to any part of theſe
" books?

" ANSWER—Paul carried much of his Rabinical
" veneration for Jewiſh monuments of tradition into
" chriſtianity with him; ſo far then as relates to theſe,
" he is an incompetent rule for us: when he ſpeaks the
" dictates

" dictates of an enlightened mind we may ſafely go " with him—I will not ſay—*follow*. He candidly owns " that he ſpoke ſometimes as a man: he ſpoke at one " time as a jew—at another time as a chriſtian. It is " equally unknown and unimportant what books he " deems holy ſcripture. It may be the Pentateuch; " perhaps the book of Jasher, which is loſt, was the " beſt of it; or the book of 'the wars of the Lord:' " in ſhort this undefined appellation of Paul is not the " ſmalleſt direction to us."

" QUERY IX.—If the people called Quakers ſhould " ever ſo grossly err as to conclude the ſcriptures to be " doubtful, what outward teſt can we bring our princi- " ples to, ſo as to give ſatisfaction to people of other " ſocieties; as, (ſo far as I know) all profeſſing chriſ- " tians, except ſome among us, acknowledge them " to be true; although, for want of attending to the re- " velation of the holy ſpirit, which gave forth the ſcrip- " tures, they have put different meanings on them?"

" ANSWER.—Let the people called Quakers evince " the purity of their principles by the purity of their " lives; and this will do more for the cauſe of truth " than multiplied reading and compiling. Let them " rely on the more ſure word of prophecy, and have " leſs to do with doctrines and commandments of men; " the world ſhall then be more curious aud inquiſi- " tive to look into the royal law, which preſerves them " a pure upright people, without books, without " clergy, and without Moſes; all which can be good, " only ſo far as they tend to bring unto CHRIST.

" Will

" Will any pretend to ſay, that, when they have execut-
" ed this office, they are ſtill needful? Shall any be ſo
" fooliſh as to ſay, if, inſtead of bringing to Chriſt,
" they lead men away, teaching doctrines diverſe from
" Chriſt's doctrine, that they are neceſſary and conve-
" nient?—ſurely they muſt be very tenacious of the
" law of formal commandments who ſhould hold them
" up in ſuch extravagant veneration.

No. III. page 73.

Extract from an Address to the people called Quakers, and others, on the fallen and degenerate state of man, by Samuel Stephens, of Dublin.

" My mind hath been for years impreſſed, under a
" feeling ſenſe of the fallen and degenerate ſtate of
" man; amongſt whom I rank myſelf, from a conſcious-
" neſs of which, I have endeavoured to ſeek the cauſe,
" which I find to be, a departure in heart, from the
" pure living principle implanted in us by a great and
" bountiful Creator; a principle which, if adhered to,
" would gradually lead us back from the fallen ſtate in
" which we are, unto that more perfect one which
" breathes glory to God in the higheſt, and peace and
" goodwill towards men; a ſtate that would redeem us
" from all the 'lo heres and lo theres;' one crying
" 'Chriſt is here,' another crying 'Chriſt is there,'
" whilſt

" whilſt they are living as without Chriſt in the world;
" ſatisfying themſelves with a name to live, and are
" dead; dwelling under the forms and ſhadows, ne-
" glecting the one thing needful, *the living ſubſtance in*
" *the ſoul, which, if attained to, is ſufficient for all things.*

" Thus far I believe it neceſſary for me to preface
" what I may have to communicate, in order to put to
" ſilence a vain and deluſive ſpirit that has gone forth
" into the world, ſaying that I and ſome others deny
" Jeſus Chriſt and his coming, and that we rank him
" as an impoſtor: a thing which is utterly false. For
" I know not one, within the circle of my acquaintance,
" that looks on him in any ſuch light; on the contrary,
" I believe him to have been the moſt perfect character
" that ever yet made his appearance amongſt the chil-
" dren of men. But all this is not ſufficient to ſatisfy
" them, becauſe I cannot ſwallow down the abſurd
" doctrine that he was God; a doctrine that they
" themſelves acknowledge they cannot comprehend, or
" underſtand; a doctrine they are as it were obliged to
" believe, becauſe their church, ſect, or party, require
" them to do ſo: and on what ground? A few vague
" ſcripture expreſſions, backed by the writings of men
" as ignorant as themſelves. For we muſt acknowledge
" that the world has been under ſuch a cloud of groſs
" darkneſs, ſo much ſo, that the very people who
" claimed to be the moſt enlightened of all, took and
" laid wicked hands on him, and put him to death,
" becauſe they could not bear the purity of his doc-
" trine, which went to ſap the foundation of their ſuper-
" ſtitious building. And ſo it has fared, more or leſs,

" with

" with all thoſe, before or ſince his day, that have en-
" deavoured to tread the ſame path; witneſs the pro-
" phets, apoſtles, and others, at different ages of the
" world, who declared againſt the eſtabliſhed religion
" of the land, whether jewiſh, heatheniſh, or what is
" called chriſtian; be it which it may, the ruling party
" were always ready to riſe up againſt them, and put
" them to death, for daring to call in queſtion their
" mode of faith, as preſcribed by law. It would be too
" tedious and unneceſſary to enter into all the particu-
" lars on that head, nor do I find myſelf equal to the
" taſk, but I ſhall confine myſelf for the preſent to one
" of the moſt recent inſtances, which is, that the
" ſociety of the people called Quakers, many of whom,
" in England, Ireland, and America, not only ſuffered
" hard and grievous impriſonments, for ſake of a
" good conſcience, but ſome of them were perſecuted
" even unto death, and particularly in America, by
" the hands of men who had fled there from a violent
" perſecution in their native land, and who in turn
" became perſecutors themſelves. This is a matter ſo
" recent and ſo well known, I need not deſcend into
" particulars, as I expect no one can deny it. But how
" *the deſcendants* of thoſe very people (the Quakers) who
" had ſtood ſo nobly for the cauſe of truth and righ-
" teouſneſs in their day, ſhould now *traduce and vilify*
" others, becauſe they wiſh to go *a ſtep farther than*
" *their forefathers have gone*, may appear cauſe of
" aſtoniſhment to ſome: but the reaſon is obvious when
" it comes to be underſtood; for the great bulk of them,
" having departed in principle and practice from their
" progenitors, they have ſet up the form in place of
" the

" the ſubſtance of true religion; ſo when they have " not the kernel, they are reſolved to have the ſhell; " and in order to ſupport that, they have declared war " againſt all who call in queſtion their empty form. " *Now as I believe all forms, without the power, to be* " *unavailing*, ſo, I *likewiſe believe the power, without the* " *form, to be of itſelf ſufficient for all thoſe who feel their* " *minds drawn thereunto.* This ſeems another cauſe of " difference; ſome plead for the outward form, as well " as the ſubſtance, and go ſo far as to ſay, it is neceſſary " to keep up the form, notwithſtanding the power do " not accompany it. To all thoſe I ſhall ſay, *I do not* " *wiſh to treſpaſs on their right of judging for themſelves,* " *and by the ſame rule, I hope they will grant me the ſame* " *liberty*; for I believe all men are created equal, that " the power of God is implanted in every human being " the world over, without reſpect to perſons, names, or " religion; the jew, and gentile, as well as the highly " profeſſing chriſtian, who may exalt himſelf as it were " unto heaven, and look down with an eye of diſdain on " the ſurrounding multitude of God's workmanſhip; a " multitude far more numerous than thoſe under the " chriſtian name; men, equally the peculiar care of " heaven; men, many of whom are as ſtrongly impreg- " nated with that heavenly eſſence of charity and love " as themſelves.

" But to return to my ſubject, which is to expoſtu- " late with thoſe under the name of Quakers. I ſhall, " in the name of wonder, aſk them, how they, as a " ſociety, who have pleaded for the liberty of con-

" ſcience

" ſcience, againſt the united efforts of ſurrounding " nations, can now ſo far deviate from their firſt " principle, as to ſet limits to the Holy One or his re- " quirings, to condemn me or another, becauſe I be- " lieve in my conſcience, I ought to do this, or re- " frain from that or the other thing, whilſt I do not " thereby violate any moral or religious law; violate, " I ſay, for ſurely any thing ſet up by man, let that " man be who he may, has a right to be pulled " down, or laid aſide by his ſucceſſor. If that be not " the caſe, reformation can never go on, either in a " civil or religious ſenſe; therefore it muſt ultimately " ſtop, nay, turn back; for, I am bold to declare it, " that the ſociety, body of men, or people who do " not recur to firſt principles, will go to decay, nay, " they muſt go beyond firſt principles, if ever they " expect to journey forward on the road towards per- " fection: for I believe there is no man hardy enough " to ſay, that there is, or ever was, any ſociety of " people, under any denomination yet, perfect; there- " fore, if that ſhould be granted, which I expect it " will be by all, our next inquiry naturally is, how " we are to attain to it. My anſwer is, by each indi- " vidual implicitly doing, and following that, which " he believes to be right, regardleſs of what man " ſhall ſay, think or do, or act towards him. Theſe I " know to be hard ſayings, and ſome may be ready to " query, who can bear them? Thoſe who are weaned " from the love of this world and its purſuits, who " are preferring the joyful proſpect of a far better in- " heritance, when time to them here, ſhall be no " more;

" more; when they ſhall have to triumph in the joy
" of their Lord; when they ſhall have to ſit down in
" that kingdom of reſt and peace, whoſe felicity ſhall
" be without end. Theſe are feelings which can and
" will ſupport through every conflict and trial in this
" life, and will lead us to an endleſs immortality."—

Page 5 *to* 10 *inclusive.*

No. IV. page 119.

EXTRACTS FROM THE WRITINGS OF JOHN HANCOCK,

Concerning Jesus Christ, &c.

" I treat the ſcriptures as I would do any other
" book. I receive ſuch parts of them as appear to
" me, on examination, to be dictated by the ſpirit of
" God, but I do not conceive them to have been
" written throughout by inſpiration.

" I cannot adopt the commonly received opinion,
" of the fall of Adam having had any effect upon
" me. I believe that I am only reſponſible for my
" own wrong doings. I feel myſelf as an accountable
" creature—a free agent, with a full liberty to chooſe
" between good and evil. I admit, from a feeling
" ſenſe of my own infirmities, that though I approve
" the things that are more excellent, I do at ſeaſons
" follow the worſe; but this proceeds from myſelf
" joining with the evil. I reject the doctrine of the
" imputed

" imputed ſin of Adam: and ſo I reject the imputed
" righteouſneſs of Chriſt. It appears uneſſential to
" me to bewilder my mind by a curious diſquiſition
" reſpecting the perſon of Chriſt: this I believe not
" to be neceſſary to ſalvation, but having a tendency
" to withdraw my attention from myſelf, and the re-
" gulation of my own conduct (the one thing needful
" for me), and to lead me to unprofitable ſpeculation
" on things not given us to know in this ſtate, and
" which, after all our ſearching, we can ſee and know
" but in part, while we continue tenants in mortality.
" We ſuffer great loſs, while our attention is diverted
" from ourſelves. The power of godlineſs, emphati-
" cally called the kingdom of heaven, is within us.
" It is there we muſt look for help to overcome evil,
" and herein, in my judgment, conſiſts the ſum and
" ſubſtance of true godlineſs, in attending to the
" diſcoveries of divine grace (the unſpeakable gift of
" God), manifeſted through the conſcience: and
" which hath appeared to all the children of men,
" without diſtinction of nation, clime, or colour; to
" thoſe who have never heard the name of Jeſus, as
" well as to thoſe who are outwardly and profeſſionally
" called by the name of Chriſt. I accept, with humble
" reverence, the holy pattern of unblemiſhed excel-
" lence left us by Chriſt. I believe the ſpirit of
" God was poured forth upon him without meaſure.
" In this ſenſe I acknowledge him to be the ſon of
" God, and deſire to prove my love and gratitude to
" God, by endeavouring to follow his example. He
" obeyed the will of his father in all things, and ſo
" are his ſincere followers called upon to do likewiſe—
" that

" that by attending to the improvable talents com-
" mitted to their ſtewardſhip, they may (though al-
" moſt at an infinite diſtance) tread in the ſame path
" to bleſſedneſs. This, I believe, is the religion
" which the holy Jeſus was the choſen meſſenger of
" God to publiſh in its purity to the world. A reli-
" gion, when compared with that profeſſed by many
" in his name, as unlike as their fruits are eſſentially
" different. Under the name of the chriſtian religion,
" all manner of enormities have been committed;
" wars have been carried on, and attempts made to
" propagate religion by the ſword; whereas the pure
" and undefiled religion, taught by him, at once
" proves the ſpurious origin of its counterfeit, and its
" own excellence, by manifeſting the fruits of holi-
" neſs; and, when ſubmitted to by man, aſſimilating
" into its own nature, which is, 'Glory to God in
" the higheſt, peace on earth, and good-will towards
" men.' The ſcope and tendency of the miniſtry of
" Jeſus Chriſt was to turn the attention inward; and
" this is ſtill the tendency of that gracious principle
" diſcovered in the heart of man: but the prevailing
" error of mankind is, ſubſtituting the ſhadow for the
" ſubſtance, truſting in the merits of a Saviour with-
" out them, and not attending to the manifeſtations
" of the grace of God within them; whoſe exiſtence
" is undeniably proved by its checks, reproofs, and
" varied operations according to our reſpective wants."
Reaſons for withdrawing from ſociety with the people called Quakers—page 9 *to* 11 *incluſive.*

On

On Religion and Morality.

" Religion, then, in my eſtimation, is not an ad-
" herence, however ſtrict, to creeds, opinions, or the
" outward forms of a ſociety, or what is called a
" church; but conſiſts in a cloſe attention to the
" frame of our minds, a ſtrict watchfulneſs againſt
" the influence of our paſſions, which, if unreſtrained,
" incline us to tranſgreſs the boundaries of right, in
" the various bye-ways and devious paths into which
" they lead the unwary. Religion is not to be eſti-
" mated by the firmneſs, or rather the obſtinacy of
" belief, adopted without examination; yet this is
" called faith by ſome. If we examine into what
" properly deſerves the name of faith, it will be
" found not to conſiſt in mere belief, uninfluential
" on the conduct, but in an unreſerved obedience
" to the divine principle manifeſted in man, through
" the medium of his conſcience and reaſon, and never
" in oppoſition to the genuine ſound dictates of either.
" They are all divine gifts, and in harmony with each
" other, until man abuſes them, by miſtaking and
" confounding conſcience with the erroneous dreams
" of his fancy, and reaſon with the ſallies and errors
" of his imagination: thus, he firſt abuſes the gifts,
" and then calls his erroneous interpretations of them
" by their names; and in his rage for making diſ-
" tinctions, which he may turn to his purpoſes, as
" party diſtinctions, he uſes diviſions, and ſub-divi-
" ſions for explaining his meaning, until he loſes him-
" ſelf by his diſtinctions in the miſt, with which he ſur-
" rounds himſelf. Thus, he calls a book revelation;
" faith,

" faith a mere belief, or opinion; conſcience, an ap-
" prehenſion formed generally from the prejudices of
" education, ſometimes right, and ſometimes wrong;
" reaſon, a ſenſe to enable him to comprehend what
" he calls natural objects; and above all, to aſſiſt him
" to make gain, which ſo many conſider as the
" great buſineſs of life. The idea affixed to morality
" is alſo narrowed to the mere negative qualities of
" not acting with open fraud, and being free from
" ſome of the groſſer vices; a meaning falling far
" ſhort indeed of the comprehenſive duties which a
" ſound morality requires.

" On the contrary, I conceive revelation to conſiſt
" in a divine communication, made in the heart of all
" the children of men; and that conſcience and rea-
" ſon are its agents, through which it operates on the
" human mind. Faith is a practical belief in the
" operation of this principle, and a ſubmiſſion, on the
" part of man, to follow its leadings and diſcoveries;
" and religion and morality (I cannot ſeparate them)
" ariſe from that ſtate of mind, wherein we yield
" obedience to thoſe impreſſions of a heavenly ſtamp
" made on the mind; not diſcoverable merely in the
" ſuperficial effects produced by an aſſent of the un-
" derſtanding; but operating a powerful effect on the
" whole tenor of the life and conduct, and producing
" the fruits of holineſs, manifeſted through the gene-
" ral actions of thoſe who ſubmit to its bleſſed in-
" fluence. It is not a dead, inactive principle, like
" a cold belief, but becomes a vivifying principle
" always inclining us to the right, when we are wil-
" ling

" ling to liſten coolly to the leſſons, which it is ever
" ready to teach us. Morality is not that cold ſyſtem,
" which ſome ſuppoſe; they affix an inaccurate mean-
" ing to it, and then they find fault with it. In my view,
" it takes in the comprehenſive circle of thoſe duties,
" which we owe to ourſelves, and to our fellow men,
" in the various relations, by which, as members of the
" one great family of mankind, we are connected to-
" gether. It begins with our more immediate connex-
" ions, of which the filial, conjugal, and parental duties
" may be put in the firſt claſs. I conſider theſe primary
" duties as the foundation of that benevolence, which, in
" various gradations, we owe to all mankind. It would
" be a deficient ſpecies of morality, which would only
" inſtruct us to love our kind, if it did not lead us, in the
" firſt inſtance, to the punctual diſcharge of the duties
" which we owe to thoſe moſt immediately connected
" with us. The proper diſcharge of our *domeſtic* du-
" ties ought to be the baſis of our *general* benevolence.
" Beginning in the domeſtic circle, with thoſe who,
" from their ſituations, have the ſtrongeſt claims on us,
" true benevolence proceeds from this center, and ex-
" tending to our neighbours, our countrymen, and our
" brethren of the human race, in their various rela-
" tions, leads to promote univerſally, peace on earth,
" and goodwill towards men."

" On the one hand, I call in queſtion the real bene-
" volence of a character, who would profeſs much
" *general good-will to mankind*, and yet neglect to
" manifeſt tenderneſs and kindneſs *in his own domeſtic*
" *circle*; for I conſider *domeſtic* benevolence (if I may

" uſe the expreſſion) to be the only ſure foundation of " *public* benevolence, and that *no moroſe, auſtere cha-* " *racter at home, can be truly poſſeſſed of general phi-* " *lanthropy*.—So, on the other hand, a really beneficent " man will not excluſively confine the ſphere of his be- " nevolence to his own private family; it will begin " there, but extend far beyond this narrow limit. Yet " many content themſelves in this ſituation; they wiſh " to aggrandize their families, while they are heedleſs " of the duties they owe to others; and even with re- " gard to their families, fall very ſhort of properly dis- " charging their real duties. Some parents think they " have ſufficiently diſcharged their duty to their chil- " dren if they leave them a large ſhare of riches, while, " at the ſame time, they have been ſhewing them an " evil example in many reſpects, training them up in " the ſordid deſire of gain, and perhaps treating them " with much auſterity. So deficient is the morality, " which paſſes current in the world!"—*Serious conſi-* *derations on Revelation, the Scriptures, &c. &c. page* 32 *to* 34 *incluſive.*

On Superstition.

" It doubtleſs requires great care in removing the " covering, that we do not injure the tree. So, al- " though I earneſtly wiſh to ſee the removal of ſuper- " ſtition, I deſire to behold it done with a cautious " hand; leſt, from the miſapplication of ſubſtantial " truths, any ſhould run themſelves into confuſion; " and thus injure themſelves, and retard the progreſs " of the cauſe they wiſh to promote: for it is a juſt " obſervation, that ſome of the moſt important truths

" lie

" lie within an hair's breadth of moſt dangerous errors. " Such is the narrow path for reformers to move in, if " they wiſh to be really uſeful to mankind!

" Infidelity on one hand, and ſuperſtition on the " other, are dangerous rocks, upon which the chriſtian " may be wrecked, in his paſſage through life, if he is " not cautiouſly on his guard againſt dangers on either " hand. Superſtition is generally rather an error of " the judgment, while the heart retains a conſiderable " ſhare of ſincerity; and in this ſituation, there is a " great aptneſs to receive without examination: thus " cuſtoms are handed down from one generation to " another, without undergoing any inquiry. Many " do not look at the rational motives which might " have occaſioned a practice to have been at firſt eſtab- " liſhed. They only look whether it be an ancient prac- " tice, and then adopt it, as if a practice, becauſe it is " of ſome antiquity, muſt be right.

" I think each generation, and every individual, " are bound to ſearch out truth for themſelves; and I " know of no ſuperior advantages, which former ages " had, to find out truth, which we may not acquire in " the preſent day, through a diligent ſearch, conducted " with ſerioufneſs, and due caution. But taking up " matters on the ſcore of tradition, accommodates the " natural indolence of man, and leaves him at liberty " to purſue his dreams of profit and of pleaſure, free " from the interruption of thinking for himſelf. Many " fall into this ſnare, and may be ſaid quietly to ſleep " away their time, and almoſt to forfeit the privilege " of rational beings.

" There are many practices recorded in ſcripture, " which I think would not be uſed if they had not " been mentioned in that book; and yet I think every " practice ſhould ſtand on its own foundation: for an- " cient practice, however uſed by ſome men good in " the main, but who yet did not ſee every thing right- " ly, cannot conſecrate error. Some may be ſhocked " at the aſſertion, yet I believe it is neceſſary to tell " bold truths, and I heſitate not to ſay, that I believe " a large maſs of errors, interwoven into the various " ſyſtems of what is called chriſtianity, has had its " origin in receiving the ſcriptures, as unmixed truth, " inſtead of letting each part and portion of them ſtand " on its own merit, without inſiſting on receiving the " whole in bulk. I think the apoſtles were truly valu- " able characters in moſt reſpects, yet that they were " not entirely free from ſuperſtition.

" Succeeding generations, inſtead of doing away " this ſuperſtition, have gradually added to the heap: " ſo that now, by accumulation, it has increaſed to a " prodigious ſize. It has become a matter of great re- " proach to attempt to point it out, or to remove this " rubbiſh, accumulated through many generations, " under which truth lies buried; and yet it is neceſſary " that it ſhould be done. Reformers, in every age, have " been ſtigmatized with the name of heretics; and the " reproach is ſtill continued; but I hope ſome will, from " time to time, be raiſed up, who will dare to ſpeak out " with firmneſs, and expoſe the abuſes and corruptions " of chriſtianity wherever they may appear." *Serious conſiderations, &c. page* 40, 41.

" I

" I belong to no ſect: nor do I want to form a new " one. I feel calm peace in my ſeparation from all " outward ſocieties. The ſentiments I expreſs are my " own. Let the reader impartially judge of them for " himſelf. While I feel a peaceful ſerenity reſpecting " the paſt, I cannot but be earneſtly ſolicitous reſpect- " ing my future ſteppings, well knowing the infirmities " incident to man, and ſenſible of my own weakneſs. " I feel awful humility to attend my mind, in thus " once more expoſing my ſentiments to public view. " My earneſt wiſh for myſelf is, that I may always " keep in this diſpoſition; and my deſire is equally " ſincere for my neighbours, that they may grow in " grace, and in the ſaving knowledge of God; and " with a ſerioufneſs, becoming a ſubject of ſuch infinite " importance, throw off the ſhackles of bigotry and " ſuperſtition, and ſubmit only to the guidance of " truth." *Serious conſiderations, &c. page* 52.

No. V. Page 131.

" *Whether the progress of time, or any change* " *in habits, opinions, or circumstances,* required " a reviſion *of the* ancient rules *of discipline.*"

Under this head it will probably be admitted, that the following minutes of the national half year's meeting of Ireland, in the years 1680, 1725, and 1748, merit

merit attention. They relate to the conduct of perſons in our ſociety who either marry with each other *by a prieſt*, or when a member of our ſociety marries with "*one of the world.*" The conduct, in either caſe, has always been regarded as a ſerious offence againſt the rules of the diſcipline; and the parties, who thus marry, are, in conſequence thereof, ſeparated from memberſhip with the ſociety. As a further means of bringing them to repentance, and alſo as a warning to others, the parents of the perſons ſo offending are enjoined not to give them "*part of their ſubſtance*, or *any outward portion*," until the delinquents be reconciled to "*friends and truth.*" With the ſame view, parents are "*adviſed* "*to take the advice of concerned friends in making their* "WILLS, *relating to ſuch rebellious children.*" If the parents themſelves have conſented to ſuch marriage, they are to be "*publickly teſtified againſt*;" and even though they have not conſented, yet, if they afterwards "*receive their children in, entertain*, or *are familiar with* "*them, till the meeting to which they belong be ſenſible of* "*their true repentance*," ſuch parents are to be "*cloſely* "*dealt with and excluded from men's or women's meet-* "*ings*;" by which is meant, not admited to ſit in meetings of diſcipline.

NATIONAL HALF YEAR'S MEETING,
Third month, 1680.

"If any friends do perceive that their children are "under ſuch a temptation, as to go to the prieſt to be "married,

" married, or to take *one of the world* to huſband or " wife, if they will not hear that counſel or advice, " which, in the fear of the Lord, they give them: then " let them inform friends, that they may deal with " them, in the order of the goſpel; that ſo, if poſſible, " they may be preſerved out of the ſnare, or the *greater* " *weight of judgment* may be laid on them, by their " parents in particular, and friends in general.

" If, notwithſtanding the advice and counſel of " parents and friends, any young people do fall into the " aforeſaid evils, we deſire and adviſe all parents to " keep very ſtrictly to the *principle of truth* in them- " ſelves, in their conduct towards their children; " which, we believe, will reſtrain them from paſſing by " that *act of great diſobedience* unto themſelves in par- " ticular, and *the Lord, and his truth*, in general, until " ſuch time that friends, through their true repentance, " receive them into unity again.

" And further, we believe it will beſt anſwer the " truth, for parents *to withhold giving ſuch diſobedient* " *children any outward portion*, until ſuch time as they " be *reconciled to friends* and *truth* as aforesaid; for " the withholding THAT, may be inſtrumental to " cauſe them to enter into a due conſideration of their " diſobedience to the Lord and their parents, from " whence true repentance may ſpring; and not only " ſo, but it may be an occaſion to prevent others from " falling into the ſame ſnare, and may put a ſtop to " *ſome of the world* in ſeeking after our children on that " account."

NATIONAL

NATIONAL HALF YEAR'S MEETING,
Ninth month, 1725.

" Where parents are ſo indulgent (contrary to the " advice given forth in the third month, 1680) as to " *receive their children in*, (who go out to be married " by a prieſt) and give *them part of their ſubſtance*, " *without firſt adviſing with the men's meeting they* " *belong to*, &c. ſuch indulgent parents are to be " deemed *unfit to ſit in men's or women's meetings*, until " they give ſuch ſatisfaction as the nature of the caſe " may require. It is alſo further adviſed, that the pa- " rents of ſuch do take the advice of concerned friends, " in *making their wills*, relating to ſuch rebellious chil- " dren; leſt, by any unadviſed act of that kind, others " ſhould be encouraged to tread the ſame ſteps."

NATIONAL HALF YEAR'S MEETING,
Third month, 1748.

" It is the judgment of this meeting, that where " *parents or others* concerned, conſent to their children " *going out to marry by a prieſt*, they ought to be *pub-* " *licly teſtified againſt*, *as ſuch with whom we cannot* " *have unity*, till they give friends proper ſatisfaction. " And where they have not conſented to ſuch marriage, " yet, if they afterward *give portions*, *entertain*, or *are* " *familiar with ſuch children*, till *friends be ſenſible of true* " *repentance in them*, that they be *cloſely dealt with*, pur- " ſuant to the advice of the minute of 1680; and that, if " they be members of men or women's meetings, they " be

" be, for ſuch offence, *excluded from the meetings* till " they give friends ſatisfaction as aforeſaid."*

The preceding minutes ſtill continue in full force, and are acted upon, as rules for the conduct of the ſociety in IRELAND. There was a time when a ſimilar conduct was purſued by the ſociety in ſome parts of ENGLAND: and it is probable that the rules, upon which ſuch conduct was founded, have never been formally aboliſhed. It is hoped, however, that there is no part either of GREAT BRITAIN, or AMERICA, where the ſociety *now* act in this manner.

Indeed it is greatly to be regretted that the cruelty and injuſtice, inſeparable from ſuch an interference, on the part of the ſociety, with the rights of private judgment, and with the ſacred and delicate ties of duty and affection, by which parents and their children were intended to be united, ſhould not have been ſufficiently obvious to eſtabliſh a conviction, that no religious ſociety ever was, or can be, juſtified in acting in the manner preſcribed by theſe minutes. With

* It will probably have been remarked, that in the preceding injunctions there is *no limitation of age,* as to the perſons thus marrying:—nor any exception relative to thoſe inſtances wherein ſuch marriages may be ſanctioned by the *deliberate* and *mature* judgment of the parties;—or receive the countenance and approbation of parents or guardians, *after a full conſideration of all the circumſtances which ſometimes attend ſuch peculiarly delicate and difficult cases.* When the parties act from the pureſt motives, and according to their beſt judgment, is it right that ſuch conduct ſhould neceſſarily incur, either the diſinheritance of the child, or the diſownment of the parents?

With reſpect to the great importance of harmony in religious opinions, between thoſe who are united by the ſolemn covenant of marriage, there can be but one ſentiment among ſerious perſons. They, who happily experience this harmony, can bear ample teſtimony to the degree in which it endears and improves this moſt intereſting bond of union. It may be queſtioned, however, whether experience has hitherto ſhewn that parents can, with beneficial effects, attempt more than early to impreſs upon the minds of their children, the importance of connecting themſelves for life with thoſe by whom their religious improvement is moſt likely to be promoted; and alſo direct their attention to the conſequences, where this conſideration has not been made a primary object by others. If more than this be attempted, it has often been known, not only grievouſly to add to the unhappineſs of ſuch injudicious marriages, but alſo to excite in the minds of, perhaps, all the parties concerned, diſpoſitions which are even more repugnant to the mild and benevolent ſpirit of the goſpel, than any thing in the conduct by which thoſe diſpoſitions were occaſioned.

No. VI. Page 137.

On the Connexion between DISOWNMENT *and* PERSECUTION.

Of thoſe perſons who are active in the diſcipline of our ſociety, there are many who are unqueſtionably pious, upright, liberal, and humane. To injuſtice or oppreſſion

oppreſſion they feel a rooted abhorrence. As men, and as chriſtians, they would equally revolt from the infliction of conſcious perſecution, fully perſuaded that it is utterly repugnant to the mild and peaceable principles of the goſpel, and to all the benevolent feelings of humanity. To their conſideration it is therefore earneſtly and affectionately recommended, *whether, if our fellow creatures inflict upon us any evil, or deprive us of any good, ſolely on account of our religious opinions, ſuch conduct can be regarded in any other light than as* PERSECUTION;—*and whether this appellation is not ſtrictly applicable to thoſe ſufferings to which conſcientious members of our ſociety may be ſubjected in conſequence of* DISOWNMENT?

To aſſiſt us farther in this inquiry, let us contemplate the ſituation of a perſon who has been educated in the ſociety, and is afterwards diſowned, for diſſenting from *ſome* of its peculiar opinions or regulations, although he ſtill continues to retain a ſtrong attachment to *moſt* of its diſtinguiſhing principles and habits.

Should ſickneſs, age, or infirmity, diſable him from ſupplying his own wants by honeſt induſtry, he is debarred from the aid of thoſe funds, for the maintenance of the poor belonging to the ſociety, which are raiſed, in ſome places, partly from the bequeſts of the dead, but more generally from the charity of the living.—And this hardſhip muſt be peculiarly felt in IRELAND, where there is *no legal proviſion* for the maintenance of the poor.

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The peculiar principles and habits of his own education, differ conſiderably from thoſe of other religious ſocieties, and he conſiders the education of his children in the ſame principles and habits, as a matter of great moment. If theſe children were born *before* his diſownment, and he is unable to educate them, the ſociety takes upon itſelf the whole expenſe neceſſary for this purpoſe.* But, if the children are born *after* the parents' diſownment, they are not only without any claim to education by the ſociety, but they are not even admiſſible into ſome of thoſe ſchools, which are eſtabliſhed under its patronage, and, in part, ſupported at its expenſe; and to which the terms of admiſſion are low, for the expreſs purpoſe of accommodating the children of members in limited circumſtances.†

He cannot conſcientiouſly take an OATH, nor can he ſerve in the MILITIA, or take part in any MILITARY OPERATIONS. Towards theſe ſcruples, the legiſlature

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* In Great Britain, if *either* of the parents is a member of the ſociety, at the time when their child is born, ſuch child becomes a member, by *birthright*, excepting only in the caſe of the parents having been married contrary to the laws of the ſociety. But in Ireland, a child does not gain memberſhip by *birthright*, in any caſe, unleſs *both* the parents are members when the child is born.

† The three ſchools eſtabliſhed by the ſociety in the provinces of Ulſter, Leinſter, and Munſter, and alſo the ſchool at Ackworth, in Yorkſhire, are of this deſcription.

legiſlature has been particularly indulgent, in framing expreſs proviſions for the relief of thoſe who are members of our ſociety. But he has now no legal claim to the benefit of theſe proviſions, and whilſt acting up to his ſenſe of duty, he is in danger of incurring ſevere penalties.

To be preſent at thoſe periodical meetings, in which the members of the ſociety are aſſembled, for the expreſs purpoſe of tranſacting their DISCIPLINE, to take a part in the conduct of it, and to be one of the objects for whoſe benefit the diſcipline is then, as well as at other times exerciſed; has been regarded as an efficient means of promoting the religious improvement of every claſs in the ſociety. Of theſe advantages, however, he is now wholly deprived.

Nor ſhould the effect on CHARACTER be overlooked. To *diſown*, is an expreſſion which admits not of being uſed otherwiſe than in an *unfavourable* ſenſe. The ſeparation from memberſhip, is almoſt always accompanied with expreſs *cenſure* of the perſon diſowned; and throughout all the rules of the diſcipline, it would be difficult to find a ſingle proviſion for diſownment, in which *demerit* is not previouſly ſuppoſed. Now the opinion of an eſtabliſhed ſociety, outweighs that of an individual. His *diſownment* by the ſociety, becomes a matter of public notoriety, but the *cauſe* of the diſownment is frequently miſrepreſented and exaggerated by vague and ignorant rumour. Hence the ſituation of perſons, in limited and dependant circumſtances, ſubſiſting,

ſubſiſting, perhaps chiefly, by the patronage of the members of the ſociety, is ſometimes rendered precarious and affecting.*

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* There is alſo a ſpecies of conduct, which has been too frequently maintained towards individuals, when, in the exerciſe of the right of private judgment, they adopt a conduct or opinions diſapproved of by the church. An inſtance of this kind occurred in the caſe of JOHN ROGERS, jun. and the following note is inſerted from a letter publiſhed by him nearly twelve months after his marriage, and referred to in page 129 of the preceding Narrative.

" Another manner of dealing was handed forth to us, " in order to deter us from purſuing the line of apprehended " duty; which was *pronouncing woes* and *judgments* againſt " us, if we would not conform to the eſtabliſhed mode of " proceeding, by ſome whoſe zeal overcame their knowledge; " as if all other modes, but theirs, were excluded from the " favour of God. It may not be amiſs here to obſerve, " that upon a ſerious review of our conduct, with reſpect to " the manner of our procedure, we feel no condemnation, " but are favoured with that peace which this world can " neither give nor take away."—*See Friendly Expostulation, by John Hancock, page* 51.

PROPHECY and DENUNCIATION have indeed been lamentably too frequent, in every period of the hiſtory of our ſociety. Inſtances of this may be referred to in the journals publiſhed by ſeveral of its members, and in the conduct of too many of its approved miniſters and zealous diſciplinarians. From this

But the caſe, moſt of all perhaps to be compaſſionated, is that of an upright and conſcientious individual, who has been, from infancy, taught to regard the judgment of the ſociety as dictated by the infallible ſpirit of God, and at the ſame time to regard the *inward* and *individual* dictates of the divine ſpirit *in his own mind*, as the primary rule of conduct, and the unerring guide to truth. Now, if he ſhould afterwards diſſent (perhaps reluctantly diſſent) from the ſociety on ſome particular points; and knowing that peace of mind always depends on a faithful obedience to the dictates of duty, he ſhould be honeſtly deſirous of acting conſiſtently with his own convictions, it will be eaſily conceived, that the doubts and fears occaſioned by the oppoſing dictates of two principles which have been thus early and powerfully impreſſed on his mind, may produce very embarraſſing and diſtreſſing conflicts.

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this miſapplication of talents, by perſons, whoſe ſtations give them a more than ordinary degree of influence in the ſociety, ſome very ſorrowful, not to ſay fatal, effects have reſulted. It may, however, with great ſatisfaction, be remarked, that this practice is obviouſly diminiſhing, and it is devoutly hoped, it will continue to be ſtill further diſcountenanced. The pious prayer of a poet of the Roman Catholic Church, well deſerves the attention of many Proteſtants:

Let not this weak, unknowing hand,
Preſume thy bolts to throw;
Or deal damnation round the land,
On each I judge thy foe.

POPE'S UNIVERSAL PRAYER.

Theſe conflicts muſt be greatly increaſed, if it ſhould happen that the points on which he diſſents, although by no means of eſſential importance in themſelves, ſhould yet be thoſe upon which memberſhip with the ſociety, as a chriſtian church, may depend. In this caſe, it would be natural, that under the influence of diffidence, and of that dependance of mind which well diſpoſed perſons frequently feel, he ſhould endeavour to weaken or ſuppreſs his convictions of duty, and to cheriſh the deſire of conforming to the practice and opinions of the ſociety.

By ſuch conduct, however, would he not be in danger of undermining the influence of that principle, which the ſociety, as well as himſelf, profeſs to regard as of *primary* importance; and which alone can give value to every religious act or ſervice? And would it not alſo follow, that the ſame conduct muſt incur the cenſure of his own mind, as proceeding, in part, from ſlaviſh fear and temporiſing policy; ſubſtituting *external* authority, in the place of *internal* conviction; and permitting the fear or the favour of men to become more influential than an unreſerved obedience to the dictates of duty, and a ſupreme regard to the approbation of the Almighty?

To avoid theſe conſequences, he calmly and ſeriouſly conſiders the ſuggeſtions of his brethren. He endeavours to diveſt himſelf of all partiality, and of all prejudice, and maturely weighs the points whereon he differs from them. The reſult is, that they ſtill fail to convince him that his own concluſions upon thoſe

thoſe points are erroneous. What then remains for him, but to endeavour uprightly to perſevere in the path of duty, and to "commit his way unto the "Lord." And will not his religiouſly diſpoſed brethren encourage him in this pious reſolution? Shall they, by whoſe counſels he has been inſtructed, and by whoſe example he has been encouraged, to regard the teachings of divine grace in his own heart, as the only guide which will never forſake him, and on which he may at all times rely, ſhall theſe be the perſons to ſtrew his path with difficulties, and to obſtruct his proſpects with diſcouragements? How affectingly are we reminded of the imperfections of human nature, when we diſcover, that the conduct, of even good men, is ſometimes manifeſtly at variance with their own principles, and that they are unconſcious of it! And where, but in that perfect example which is exhibited throughout the whole conduct of our Saviour, ſhall we find the pureſt principles and the moſt conſiſtent practice mutually recommending, and reflecting luſtre on, each other!

The conſcientious diſſenter from the ſociety is, however, ſo far from receiving encouragement from his brethren, or even from being calmly left to attend to the genuine dictates of his inward guide, that he has now to ſuſtain a further trial,—the public cenſure of the church; and, unleſs poſſeſſing a vigorous and independent mind, he may believe himſelf expoſed to the hazard of thoſe momentous conſequences, which neceſſarily reſult from combining the attribute of infallibility with (what is not unfrequently termed)

the fundamental tenet of the ſociety ; and which conſequences have been explicitly and repeatedly aſſerted by its approved writers, viz. *that the ſentence pronounced by its faithful members on earth, is recorded, and will be confirmed at the ſolemn tribunal of heaven.**

Now if difficulties and ſufferings, like theſe, are the *neceſſary* conſequences of diſownment, ſhall we not be compelled to admit, that DISOWNMENT is intimately connected with PERSECUTION? And can any thing leſs than a poſitive and explicit divine command, or ſome abſolute and invincible NECESSITY, juſtify a religious ſociety in framing thoſe rules from which ſuch conſequences flow?

Let it not be conceived that the reaſonings, ſuggeſted by this view of the ſubject, would go to the total overthrow of diſcipline in our ſociety. Far different is the intention with which they have been adduced, and it is hoped that, by no candid conſtruction, can they be proved to have that tendency.

To the orderly exiſtence of every religious ſociety *ſome* regulations muſt be neceſſary. Theſe may reaſonably be ſuppoſed to be ſuch as the general body of the ſociety approve, and the wiſh to become, or to continue, a member of ſuch ſociety, neceſſarily preſuppoſes either an approbation of the exiſting regulations generally, or a willingneſs to comply with them, ſo long as they are deemed important by the ſociety.

With

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*For the note, here referred to, see page 62.

With reſpect to the regulations, however, and eſpecially for a ſociety, in which the bulk of its members become ſuch by *birthright*, and are thereby ſubject to laws, in the forming of which they have had no concern, and from *ſome* of which they may diſſent, although cordially approving the *principal part*, it will ſurely be admitted that the regulations, upon a conformity to which *memberſhip is made dependant*, ſhould never be multiplied or retained, *beyond what the* STRICT NECESSITY OF THE CASE REQUIRES.

This NECESSITY clearly extends to all regulations, which are eſſentially connected with the ſolemnity of the public worſhip of the ſociety, and the edification of its members; and with thoſe parts of its diſcipline, which are ſubſervient to theſe objects. It may alſo include thoſe regulations which have a tendency to diſcourage immorality of conduct, and, in caſe of their failing to produce this effect, to preſcribe that ſuch conduct ſhall be brought under the more immediate cogniſance of the ſociety.

And, as it may be important to the ſociety that it ſhould be correctly known, who are its members, it will follow that the terms of memberſhip ought to be clearly underſtood; and that proper regulations muſt be neceſſary, in the caſe of perſons becoming, or ceaſing to be, members.*

* If difference of opinion between the ſociety and any of its members is conſcientiouſly felt, and if this difference extends

But if thoſe regulations of the ſociety, on which memberſhip is made to depend, ſhould extend to ſuch matters of opinion or of conduct as have no concern with the preceding objects; if conformity is to be exacted upon points, with reſpect to which every individual can freely attend to the dictates of his own reaſon and conſcience, without ſuffering any eſſential diſadvantage by not acting in concurrence with his brother; and if the regulations for exacting this conformity are found to limit a brother, in the exerciſe of his private judgment, and to impoſe a painful reſtraint upon him, with reſpect to points which he deems important; can ſuch regulations be either expedient or NECESSARY?

Every regulation, upon which memberſhip is made to depend, and which has not the unanimous ſanction of the ſociety, neceſſarily impoſes a difficulty upon thoſe by whom the regulation is diſapproved of. To a certain extent this difficulty is unavoidable; but if the regulation

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tends ſo far that a full perſuaſion is entertained, by each, that the opinions of the other are erroneous and injurious, and the continuance of a ſociety-connexion between them becomes undeſirable and burthenſome, on account of the reſponſibility ſuppoſed to be attached to it—in this caſe it is equally competent to either party to announce, that ſuch connexion no longer exiſts. And, as the ſeparation has been MUTUALLY VOLUNTARY AND FREE, it is not juſtly liable to the imputation of PERSECUTION, even though ſome hardſhip or ſuffering ſhould be occaſioned by it. The caſes of John Hancock, and Abraham Shackleton, and perhaps ſome others, mentioned in the preceding narrative, are of this deſcription.

regulation itself be UNNECESSARY, then the difficulty, which it occasions, is also unnecessary.

By maintaining that great and important doctrine, that although it is our duty to profit by whatever information we can derive from the scriptures—from revelations of the divine will, whenever it may please God to favour us with them, through the medium of our fellow-creatures—and from every other external means which may be afforded us—yet that, to every individual person, the dictates of duty in his own mind are the ultimate and paramount rule of all conduct, in matters of religion—the society must feel itself *pledged in the highest possible degree*, to respect and to cherish the exercise of the rights of private judgment in all its sincere and conscientious members. If, however, the judgment or conduct of such members becomes shackled by decisions or regulations of the society upon points, with which its existence, as a christian church, has no NECESSARY connexion, it will follow that the primary object, for which the society has professedly been formed, is counteracted, and may even be frustrated, by other objects of inferior importance.

Let us attend to the several descriptions of persons, affected by those regulations which extend to matters of opinion or conduct, upon a conformity to which membership is made to depend, but concerning which diversity of opinion is likely to exist, and we shall find, that this view of the subject furnishes few recommendations in favour of compulsory regulations, beyond what

what the STRICT NECESSITY OF THE CASE REQUIRES.

FIRST—They who, after mature examination, piouſly and conſcientiouſly approve and maintain ALL the principles and habits, which are peculiar to the ſociety, have a much better foundation for their faith and conduct than can be derived from any human regulations. The concurrence and co-operation of their brethren would be very pleaſant and deſirable, but they are not ESSENTIAL. Theſe perſons would continue to act conſiſtently with their own apprehenſions of duty, although no *compulsory* regulations exiſted. All regulations, therefore, extending to matters of opinion or conduct, which are not eſſentially connected with the exiſtence of the ſociety, as a chriſtian church, are, to perſons of this claſs, altogether UNNECESSARY.

SECOND—In every religious ſociety, it is to be feared, that there is a conſiderable proportion of its members who have adopted, or rather perhaps have liſtened to, the opinions by which it is diſtinguiſhed, without adequate examination; and they have therefore no rational conviction of their truth. They may indeed conform to the regulations of the ſociety, but it muſt be evident that no religious ſociety can derive ſtrength, *for any valuable purpoſe*, from the conformity of this claſs of its members. They are FORMALISTS; and with equal conſiſtency they would have been MAHOMETANS in ARABIA, HINDOOS in INDIA, or CATHOLICS in SPAIN, if they had been born and educated in any of thoſe countries.

There

There is a THIRD claſs, who are frequently incited to activity, by that ſpirit of inquiry which is generally found in virtuouſly diſpoſed minds, and eſpecially in the early and middle periods of life. It ſometimes happens, however, that theſe perceive that the tendency of inquiry concerning ſome of the tenets or regulations of their ſect, is to create doubt, and that doubt may terminate in diſapprobation. Now if this conſequence ſhould take place, and if it ſhould produce a conſiſtent effect upon their conduct, they are aware that their reputation may be affected, and that the pleaſure of ſome of their ſocial intercourſes may be interrupted. They have not virtue enough to ſacrifice the gratification which they derive from theſe ſources, at the ſhrine of truth; and yet they feel an honeſt deſire to be her votaries. Under this influence, the ſpirit of inquiry is again awakened, and again their doubts approximate to diſapprobation; but ſtill, the fear of man recurs, and at length prevails. The integrity of their minds becomes weakened by theſe repeated defeats; and, if they do not incur the guilt of abſolute diſſimulation, they merge into the character of "the double-minded man," and are, like him, "unſtable in all their ways."

Compulſory regulations, beyond what the STRICT NECESSITY OF THE CASE REQUIRES, expoſe the virtue of perſons of this claſs to temptation and to defeat, which they would otherwiſe have eſcaped: they become "a ſtumbling block and an occaſion to fall in a brothers way." By ſuch conduct, a ſociety multiplies the obligations to which its members are ſubject, but it

it *fatally* diminiſhes its real ſtrength, and induces a *premature diſſolution*. Whenever human inſtitutions multiply duties, beyond thoſe which God and nature have evidently preſcribed, the certain effect is to weaken the obligation, and corrupt the excellence of the genuine principles of religion and morality; and the hiſtory of all ages may be ſafely appealed to, for the lamentable impolicy of ſuch conduct.

By a FOURTH claſs of perſons, the regulations of religious ſocieties are, like every thing elſe connected with religion, regarded with utter contempt. The expreſſions of this contempt, however, are ſtudiouſly ſuppreſſed, and the regulations are ſtrictly complied with. By an external conformity to theſe regulations, their genuine character is concealed; they aſſume the garb, and imitate the demeanour, of perſons of acknowledged piety and virtue; and they are thereby enabled, with more ſucceſs, to prey upon the credulous and the unſuſpecting. Theſe men have indeed abundant reaſon for being the advocates of regulations, by which, memberſhip with a religious ſociety is made to depend on preſcribed modes of conduct, or the profeſſion of abſtract and indefinite opinions. But what advantages can the genuine friends of religion and virtue derive from a coalition ſo dangerous and unnatural?

There remains ONE OTHER CLASS—(in ſeveral reſpects reſembling the deſcription FIRST mentioned) Men who are the ſincere, upright, and intrepid friends of truth. They know her worth, they revere her excellence, and they faithfully maintain

maintain their attachment to her, undiſmayed by the terrors of poverty, ignominy, exile, or death. With reſpect to this claſs, it has frequently happened, and it is naturally to be expected, that it will continue frequently to happen, that *ſome* of the exiſting tenets or regulations of the ſect, with which they have aſſociated, may not comport with their individual opinions. Actuated, however, by a ſincere deſire to follow truth whitherſoever ſhe may lead, they will not heſitate, on all proper occaſions, to avow their opinions, and by them, at all times, to regulate their conduct. And can any human reſtrictions oppoſe a barrier to the inquiries of minds like theſe? Do the points, on which they *differ* from their brethren, bear any compariſon, in certainty or importance, with thoſe on which they are mutually *agreed?* And is it for the excluſion of *ſuch* members that the regulations of a religious ſociety ſhall be multiplied or maintained beyond what the STRICT NECESSITY OF THE CASE REQUIRES?

We conclude in the pathetic language of a pious, benevolent, and enlightened man, one of the brighteſt ornaments of our own ſociety, and whoſe name is held in grateful remembrance by thoſe of every ſociety, who enjoy the bleſſings of that mild and equal government of which he was the firſt founder, in PENNSYLVANIA.

" Oh, the day will come, wherein ONE ACT OF TEN-
" DERNESS, about matters of conſcience, ſhall find a
" better reward, than ALL THE SEVERITY by which
" men uſe to propagate their perſuaſions in the world;—
" and

" and there is great reaſon for it, ſince the one flows " from the SAVIOUR, the other from the DESTROYER " of men." *IV. Penn's letter to the Senate and Council of Embden. See Sewell's Hiſtory, page* 540.

Note, ſee page 54.

A ſincere desire to state, with perfect fairness, the opinions of the writers, who are mentioned in the following note, has unavoidably extended it to such a length, as precludes its insertion in the page which refers to it.

On the ſubject of INFALLIBILITY, ISAAC PENINGTON thus expreſſes himſelf:

" Laſtly, here, in the light, I meet with certainty, aſ- " ſurance, ſatisfaction, yea infallibility. I meet with the " evidence and demonſtration of God's ſpirit, which is in- " fallible. I meet with God's witneſs, which is an infallible " witneſs. I meet with God's ſpirit which is an infallible " ſpirit, who infallibly leads into all truth, and infallibly " guides in the truth. I meet with an infallible ſhepherd " who hath an infallible voice, and gives to his ſheep an in- " fallible ear, wherewith they infallibly hear. He opens an " infallible eye, and gives to it an infallible ſight of God, " and the heavenly myſteries of his kingdom. The ſpirit " breathes infallibly, begets infallibly, leads infallibly, creates " a new heart, a right ſpirit; which heart, which ſpirit is, of " God's infallible nature, like him; for that which is born of " the ſpirit is ſpirit. That which is born of man's fallible " ſpirit and wiſdom is fallible; but that which is born of " God's ſpirit and heavenly wiſdom, is of the nature of his " ſpirit and wiſdom; and hence it is that wiſdom is juſtified

" of

" of her children. The apoſtle ſpeaks to the Galatians of " having begun in the ſpirit, chap. 3. v. 3. and did they " not begin in that which is infallible? And, if they went " on in the ſpirit, did they not go on in that which is infal- " lible? I NEVER FOUND THE LIGHT DECEIVE ME, NOR DID " I EVER FIND THE BIRTH OF GOD'S SPIRIT, THE HOLY " ELECT SEED, DECEIVED IN ME. And the new and living " way, wherein this birth walks, is infallible, in which there " is no erring, by thoſe who eye the Lord and follow his " ſpirit therein." *See* SOME EXPERIENCES," &c. &c. *Penington's Works vol.* ii. *p.* 674.

A ſimilar opinion was maintained by ROBERT BARCLAY, and the ſubject is diſcuſſed at ſome length in his work, entitled, " The anarchy of the Ranters, and other Libertines, " the hierarchy of the Romaniſts, and other pretended " Churches, equally refuſed and refuted, in a two-fold " Apology for the Church and People of God, called in de- " riſion Quakers; wherein, &c. &c. &c. is alſo the ancient " Apoſtolic order of the Church of Chriſt re-eſtabliſhed " among them, and ſettled upon its right baſis and founda- " dation." This work has been *lately* republiſhed by the ſociety, with an *additional* title page prefixed to it. The author aſſerts, that *in the true church, there will, in cases of differences and controversies, still be an infallible judgment from the spirit of God,* (page 84 and 88) *which ought to be submitted to* (p. 85) And for the purpoſe of proving the infallibility of this judgment, and of vindicating the order and government of the church, the following poſitions are advanced:

" Firſt, That Jeſus Chriſt, the king and head of the " church, did appoint and ordain that there ſhould be order " and government in it.

" Secondly

" Secondly, That the apoſtles and primitive chriſtians, " when they were filled with the Holy Ghoſt, and immedi- " ately led by the ſpirit of God, did practiſe and commend " it.

" Thirdly, *That the same occasion and necessity* NOW " *occurring, which gave them opportunity to exercise that* " *authority, the church of Christ hath the same power* " NOW *as ever, and are led by the same spirit into the* " *same practices.*"—*Page* 12.

The author next ſtates the importance of not being ſcandalized by names and ſounds, and of diſtinguiſhing between the uſe and abuſe of church power, and he then proceeds:

" For that Jeſus Chriſt did appoint order and government " to be in the church, is very clear from his plain words, " Matt. c. 18. v. 15, 16, 17, 18. Moreover, if thy brother " ſhall treſpaſs againſt thee, go tell him his fault between " thee and him alone; if he ſhall hear thee, thou haſt " gained thy brother, But if he will not hear thee, then " take with thee one or two more, that in the mouth of " two or three witneſſes every word may be eſtabliſhed. And " if he ſhall neglect to hear them, tell it unto the church: " But if he neglect to hear the church, let him be unto " thee as an heathen man and a publican. Verily I ſay unto " you, whatſoever ye ſhall bind on earth, ſhall be bound in " heaven; and whatſoever ye ſhall looſe on earth, ſhall be " looſed in heaven. From which ſcripture it doth mani- " feſtly and evidently follow. Firſt, That Jeſus Chriſt in- " tended there ſhould be a certain order and method in his " church, in the procedure towards ſuch as tranſgreſs. Se- " condly, That he that refuſeth to hear two, is become more " guilty

" guilty, (as hardened) than in refuſing to hear him that " firſt reproved him alone. Thirdly, That refuſing to hear " the judgment of the church or whole aſſembly, he doth " thereby exclude himſelf, and ſhut out himſelf from being " a member; and is juſtly judged by his brethren, as an " heathen and a publican. And laſtly, that the church, ga- " thering or aſſembly of God's people has power to examine " and call to an account, ſuch as appearing to be among them, " or owning the ſame faith with them, do tranſgreſs; and " in caſe of their refuſing to hear or repent, to exclude " them from their fellowſhip. *And that God hath a special* " *regard to the judgment and ſenſe of his people, thus* " *orderly proceeding, ſo as to hold ſuch* BOUND IN HEAVEN " WHOM THEY BIND ON EARTH; AND SUCH LOOSED IN " HEAVEN WHOM THEY LOOSE ON EARTH."—*Page* 13.

A quotation to the ſame purpoſe, from the preceding work, is given ſtill more largely in a treatiſe concerning the diſcipline of the people called Quakers, by JOHN RUTTY, M. D.—*Page* 21.

Both PENINGTON and BARCLAY ſaw, however, the neceſſity of guarding againſt the inferences, which it was obvious would be made from their opinions concerning infallibility, as connected with the pretenſions of both individuals and the church. For effecting this object, a poſtſcript was added by the former, which contains the following paſſage:

" I do not ſay that I, as a man, am infallible, or that " any of us, as men, are infallible; but God's light, God's " grace, God's truth, God's ſpirit, God's wiſdom and power " is infallible; and ſo far as we partake of that, are ga- " thered into, and abide in that, we partake of that which " is infallible, and are gathering into and abide in that

" which

" which is infallible. And oh! let not men reſt in or be " contented with that knowledge which is fallible, but " preſs after unity and fellowſhip with the Lord in his in- " fallible ſpirit, there being no true union nor fellowſhip " with him in any thing that is fallible."—*Page* 675.

And with ſimilar views, Barclay alſo has endeavoured to qualify his poſitions by the following limitation:

" Next again, infallibility in the church, (according as " we hold it, and I have above defined it) no man, upon our " ſuppoſition, can deny it. For ſince we firſt aſſert as a " principle, that no gathering, no church, nor aſſembly of " people, however true their principles, or exact their form " be, are to be accounted the church of Chriſt, except the " *infallible* ſpirit lead and guide; what can be the hazard to " ſay that, in *ſuch* a church, there is ſtill an *infallible* judg- " ment?"—*Page* 79.

Some perſons may, however, be of opinion, that the doctrine of infallibility, although thus limited and qualified, is ſtill as open to objection, and, under the influence of credulity and enthuſiaſm, as liable to miſapplication and abuſe, as the doctrine of *abſolute* infallibility; that it is impalpable to all graſp, eludes all inquiry, acknowledges no definite connexion with perſons, place, or time, preſcribes no teſt by which the validity of its claims, whether aſſerted by ourſelves or others, can be fairly aſcertained; and finally reſolves itſelf into an accommodating truiſm, which admits not of any uſeful or practical application to the duties of life, viz.—*that they who are infallible must necessarily be right, and that the competent judges of their conduct or opinions, are those only who concur in opinion with them.*

To

To thoſe who are acquainted with the lives, and writings of Penington, and Barclay, it is unneceſſary to ſay that they were men of eminent piety and devotedneſs to what they believed to be, the cauſe of truth. Conſidering the age, and the very peculiar circumſtances of the times, in which they lived, they are deſervedly regarded as men of liberal and enlightened minds. On various ſubjects their opinions are correct and inſtructive; they were not adopted from education or imitation; but were the reſult of ſerious and diligent inquiry; and if in any of them, the ſlighteſt apprehenſion of error had been entertained by these men, we have ample reaſon to believe, that their opinions would have been afreſh ſubjected to a ſevere ſcrutiny with firmneſs and integrity. In theſe reſpects their example is highly worthy of imitation. Surely, however, neither their opinions, nor thoſe of any other man, are to be adopted on the ſanction of a name, or upon any human authority whatever, but muſt ſtand or fall by their own intrinſic evidence.

On the ſubject of this lengthened note it may further be briefly remarked, that although there be countleſs gradations of animated beings, ſome of whom may arrive at degrees of intelligence, of which we cannot form even the moſt diſtant idea, yet it may ſurely, without preſumption, be affirmed, that to "GOD, ONLY WISE," belongs the attribute of INFALLIBILITY. Equally reaſonable is it to conceive that, the nearer the approach which the higheſt orders of created beings make to THIS SOVEREIGN PERFECTION of the Deity, the more clearly do they diſcover how infinitely beyond even their attainment INFALLIBILITY muſt ever remain. Shall man then, frail and finite man—ſhall any aſſembled church, and leaſt of all any proteſtant chriſtian church, perſuade themſelves that INFALLIBILITY, even in any qualified ſenſe of the expreſſion, belongs to them? The baleful

baleful effects of such an opinion have been obvious in every religious society by which it has been maintained; and so long as the laws, by which the Almighty has hitherto been pleased to preserve and govern the world, shall continue, it may be safely predicted that the same cause will continue to produce the same effect.

FINIS.

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